170 One-Page Windsor Locks History Chapters

by

Mel Montemerlo

Main Street 1960s

This book was written and published in 2026.

Other Books by Mel Montemerlo

TITLE	YEAR
Windsor Locks History	2017
Windsor Locks History: Volume II	2019
Windsor Locks History: Volume III	2020
Windsor Locks Musicians	2021
Understanding Windsor Locks History	2022
Windsor Locks History: Volume IV	2023
Extraordinary Windsor Locks Accomplishments and the People Who Made Them	2024

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archive.org.
Google Books
Apple Books
Windsor Locks Public Library's website.
https://www.windsorlockslibrary.org/

Introduction

Dear Reader,

This book contains 170 " One-Page Windsor Locks history chapters". This is an "encyclopedia" of town history. The write-ups are short, but they include important topics is town history. As many photos as possible were included.

You can download this book from a number of websites, at no cost. They are available on the Windsor Locks Public Library website, archive.org, Apple Books, Google books and other sources.

You can do a computer-search for names and topics which interest you, and then go directly to that page. If you find a topic you want more information on, you have to go to real history books that have chapters full of information on important history topics.

If you don't know how to find a document online, or how to search the document online or on your computer, just ask one of your family or a neighbor for help. Most teenagers can do this easily.

I hope you enjoy and profit from the book. I thoroughly enjoyed developing it. I developed the 170 "one-pagers" for posting on Facebook to Windsor Locks Groups. I have been posting these for about three years, and thought it would be a good idea to put them in book form so that people could easily find the ones they saw online and liked.

Enjoy. Thank you very much.

Mel Montemerlo
August 4, 2026

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Two Italian-American Social Clubs

Italian American Club - 1930

Italian American Club - 1963

The Italian American Citizens Club formed in 1930. In 1930, they bought a house on South Center Street from C. H. Dexter & Co. to use as a clubhouse. They had hundreds of meetings and events there over the decades. In 1963, that building was destroyed by fire. In the same year, they bought asingle story brick building on Second Street to replace it. in 2017, the Italian-American Club became a private bar. Anyone could join. Since it was a private club, members could smoke in the club. At that time, smoking was not allowed in public bars. By this time, the need for emigrants to have a club which allowed them to socialize with others from from their home country, so the reason for the existence of all such clubs no longer existed.

The Italian Progressive Club began in 1931. Their first meeting was in a private home in back of Sisitzky's Market. A few months later, they built a clubhouse at 97 Suffield St..The IPC was active into the 1960s. As time passed, the membership dwindled, and things happened as they did with the Italian American Club. In 2017, it also became a Private Club, so it's patrons could smoke as they drank. Later, it closed. The immigrants had become Americanized.

Italian Progressive Club

2 1/2 Centuries of Crossing the Connecticut River

The Ferry between Windsor Locks and Warehouse Point 1783-1886

Suspension Bridge 1886-1921

Truss Bridge 1921 -1992

"Bridge Street Bridge" built in 1992

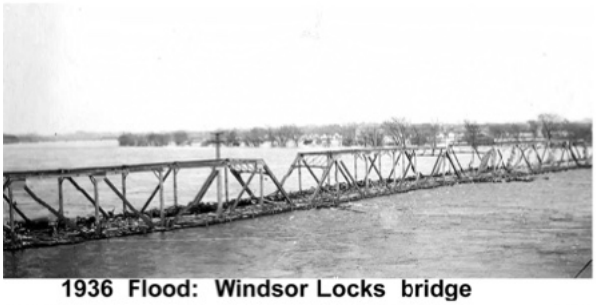
Sequence of Businesses at 6 North Main Street: 1938-2025

Park Chevrolet, 6 North Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn.

1938 - 1965 - **Park Chevrolet,** owned by Jack Quagliaroli.
1965 - 1975 - "**Mid-Town Garage**" - car-repair business owned by Peter and Frank (Junie) Quagliaroli, .
1975- 1985 - "**Mid-Town Subaru**". The Quagliaroli brothers closed their car-repair business and opened a Subaru dealership. In 1985, they moved the Subaru Dealership to Route 75.
1988 - 2007 - **Chuck's Auto** - Chuck Sika's car-repair and towing business.
? - 2020 - **Dance studio** - Closed because of the COVID pandemic.
2021 - Continuing - **Vinnie's Little Acre** - Produce, Flowers Plants Arts/Crafts

Vinnie's Little Acre, 6 North Main St. Windsor Locks, CT.

1936 Connecticut River Flood in Windsor Locks and Warehouse Point



1936 Flood: Windsor Locks bridge

1936 Flood - looking at Windsor Locks from Warehouse Point

1936 - Fire truck on Main St., Windsor Locks

Windsor Locks & Warehouse Pt:1936

Windsor Locks had no floods for a 100 year period.
Windsor Locks' worst century for flooding was 1900-2000.
1936 was the worst flood in Windsor Locks.

Three Main Street Businesses: In their Prime, Ready for Demolition, and During Demolition

The Rialto, Swede's & Sid's Modern Drug. A&P and Coly's Hotel on the right.

Three stores on Main Street
1) in their prime
2) ready for demolition
3) during demolition

Steps 2 and 3 were during 1975

For many, steps 2 and 3 were difficult to watch.

The three buildings ready for demolition.

Rialto, Swede's & Sid's Modern Drug, near the end of their demolition - 1975

Windsor Locks - Warehouse Pt Bridge - 1936 Flood

The above photo is from the 2003 book *Images of America: Windsor Locks*, by Leslie Matthews Stansfield. Here we see the Windsor Locks - Warehouse Point bridge, with water up to the road level in the flood of 1936.

The March 1936 flood was devastating to communities along the banks of the Connecticut River. Spring came early and caused the frozen Connecticut River to break up in to huge chunks of ice which dammed the river. When the massive dam burst, the river flooded towns and farms. Windsor Locks was hit hard.

Two Large Windsor Locks Italian Weddings ~1920

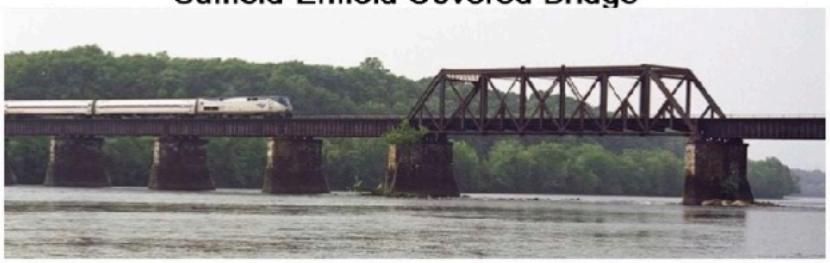
Wedding of Leo and Domenichella Lefemine, May 24, 1920, Windsor Locks, Conn. Center: Vito Colapietro, Leo and Domenichella (Spada) Lefemine, Anna Colapietro Domenichella and Anna are holding flowers. Vito and Anna were "sponsors".

The Wedding of Vito Lefemine and Maria Casarole - 1922

5 Bridges in the Windsor Locks Area - Top Two are Gone.

The Suffield - Thompsonville "Iron Bridge"

Suffield-Enfield Covered Bridge



Windsor Locks - Warehouse Point Railroad Bridge

Bridge Street Bridge - between Windsor Locks and Warehouse Point

Dexter D. Coffin Bridge on Rt 91, crossing Conn. River

Three towns tried to revamp a decaying part of their town in the late 1960s. Two turned them into successful shopping areas. One didn't.

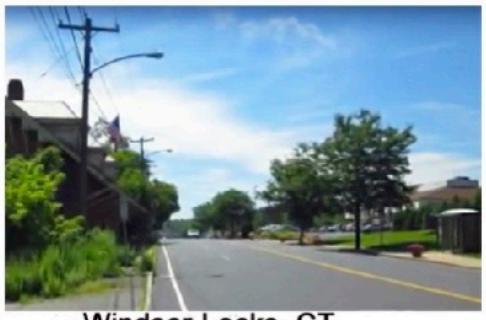
Littitz PA had a section of decaying Victorian houses. A group of citizens joined together and went to the town government with a plan. Each of them would buy one of the houses, rebuild it in the original style, and turn it into a store which they would own and run. They planned to turn that small section of the town into a high-class shopping center. Their proposal was accepted . The town built a big parking lot, and a Welcoming Center. It was a complete success.

Littitz, PA

Cape May, NJ had a section of decaying Victorian houses. The town developed a plan to buy up all of the properties, and to sell parcels to people to start businesses. The buildings had to be in the old style. Each of the new buildings was to be a store or a restaurant. The street was only for walking, but the town came up with a plan for parking on the streets around the rebuilt section. The plan was executed, and was a success.

Cape May, NJ

Windsor Locks, CT had a Main St. which has a line of old buildings with retail businesses, but the buildings were getting into bad shape.. Windsor Locks got $1M from the federal government to redevelop Main Street. The bought the old businesses and tore them down, They promised that new businesses would come come in to replace the old ones.. Unfortunately, no businesses came in to replace the old ones, and the town was left without a street of shops.



Windsor Locks, CT

WHY THE REDEVELOPMENTS SUCCEEDED FOR LITTITZ AND CAPE MAY BUT NOT FOR WINDSOR LOCKS. Littitz and Cape May had many wealthy citizens who were experienced businessmen who wanted another business. Windsor Locks did not. The Windsor Locks businessmen whose mills had closed, had gone to live elsewhere. Windsor Locks had not been successful in attracting citizens who were successful, experienced entrepreneurs.

Aerial Photos of Downtown WL - 1968

Downtown Windsor Locks,
Aerial View ~1968

Main St.,Church St, entrance to
bridge, Montgomery Bldg ~1968

. Old Train Station, Canal, Main St,
Grove St,Oak St,Coly's Hotel, A&P ~1968

**Union School, Old High School, Church St.
-1968**

256 lb. Sturgeon Caught in Connecticut River by the Dexter Building

Page 3 of the April 15, 1881 Windsor Locks Journal had the following article.

A sturgeon was caught in the river back of Dexter's mill on Wednesday afternoon which weighed 256 pounds. It measured eight feet in length. It furnished food for about twenty familes for two days.

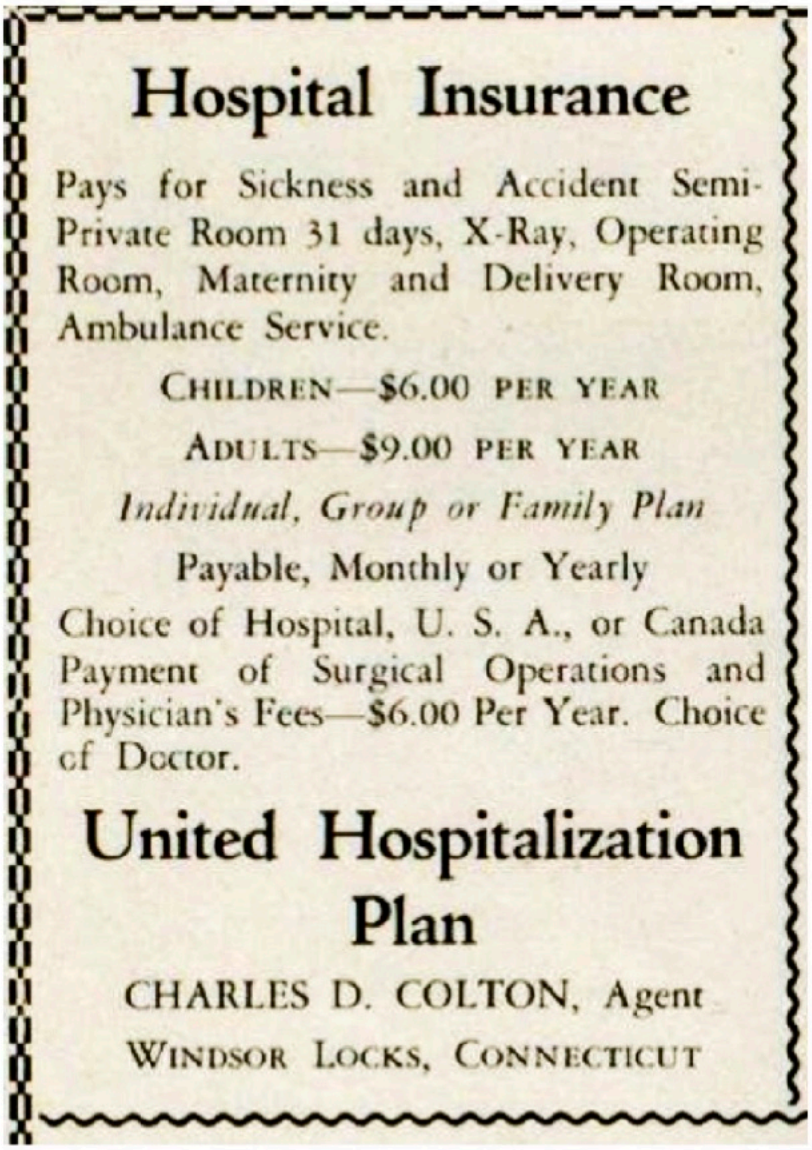
Page 6 of the same issue had an article which said: " Joseph Bassinger went sturgeon fishing on Tuesday and caught three, two of which weighed about one hundred and fifty pounds. A pretty good day's sport."

No other such sturgeon catches were found in any of the other Windsor Locks Journals.

Following is a photo of an 8 foot long, 250 pound sturgeon, which is about the same size as the one referred to in the first Windsor Locks Journal article.

8 ft. long, 250 pound sturgeon

Health Insurance in Windsor Locks - 1939



Hospital Insurance

Pays for Sickness and Accident Semi-Private Room 31 days, X-Ray, Operating Room, Maternity and Delivery Room, Ambulance Service.

CHILDREN—$6.00 PER YEAR

ADULTS—$9.00 PER YEAR

Individual, Group or Family Plan

Payable, Monthly or Yearly

Choice of Hospital, U. S. A., or Canada Payment of Surgical Operations and Physician's Fees—$6.00 Per Year. Choice of Doctor.

United Hospitalization Plan

CHARLES D. COLTON, Agent

WINDSOR LOCKS, CONNECTICUT

This ad was in the 1939 Windsor Locks High School Yearbook. In 1939, the cost of health insurance for an adult was $9 per year. A cost inflation calculator tells us that $9 in 1939 would be worth $206 in 2025. The cost of health insurance for an adult in Windsor Locks would be much higher in 2025 than $206. Notice that in 1939, the $9 covered sickness and accident injuries, 31 days in a semi-private hospital room, X-rays, Operating room, Maternity and Delivery room costs, and ambulance services.

Bob Steele, WTIC, Hartford

Living in Windsor Locks in the 1950s and 60s, you heard Bob Steele on WTIC often. His charm was infectious. He worked at WTIC for 66 years. Steele began his career in broadcasting in the 1930s. He joined WTIC radio in 1936, initially working as an announcer. In 1943, he became the host of the morning program that would eventually be named *The Bob Steele Show.* The program aired weekdays from 5:30 to 10:00 a.m. ET and became widely popular throughout Southern New England for its mix of news, humor, and commentary. Steele was known for his distinctive delivery, use of humor, and personal connection with listeners. He frequently shared commentary on language, pet peeves, and regional culture. He was also known for his "Word for the Day" segment.

1816 - The Year Without A Summer

In 1816, Windsor Locks was not yet its own town. The Pine Meadow section of Windsor became Windsor Locks in 1854. An amazing thing happened in the Northeast section of America in 1816. It was known as the "Year Without a Summer". In 2022, William P. and Nicholas P. Klingaman wrote an article for the New England Historical Society, which provided the following information.

The year 1816 was known as "**The Year Without a Summer**" in New England. Six inches of snow fell in June, and every month of the year had a hard frost. Temperatures dropped to as low as 40 degrees in July and August as far south as Connecticut. "The Year Without A Summer" had a far-reaching impact. Crop failures caused hoarding and big price increases for agricultural commodities. People went hungry. Some farmers gave up trying to make a living in New England and headed west. Politicians who ignored the the problem found themselves out of office.

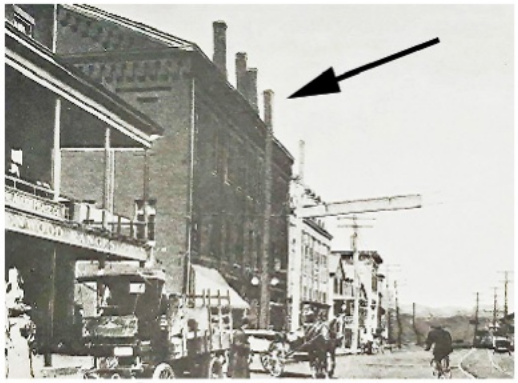
Thomas Robbins of East Windsor noticed the late spring. He wrote in his diary: "the vegetation does not seem to advance at all." On May 12, strong winds and freezing temperatures from Canada killed the buds on fruit trees. Inch-thick ice formed on ponds and streams from Maine to upstate New York. By the end of May, corn plants froze in central Maine. Hopes of salvaging what remained of the corn crop were dashed by a severe frost on August 28. Maine and New Hampshire farmers cut up whole fields of corn for fodder. Rev. William Fogg, of Kittery Maine, summed up 'The Year Without a Summer": "Crops cut short and a heavy load of taxes." People ate raccoons, mackerel and pigeons.

On June 6, 1816, six inches of snow fell on New England. Clockmaker Chauncey Jerome wrote in his autobiograph that he walked to work that day in Plymouth, CT, wearing heavy woolen clothes, an overcoat and mittens. Temperatures seesawed up and down throughout the "Year Without a Summer", bringing hope on warm days that the crops could be harvested after all. Then sharp cold spells brought despair. On June 22, for example, temperatures reached 101 degrees in Salem, Mass. But July 4 was cool. Then a northwest wind brought a three-day cold spell, with 30-degree temperatures in northern New England, and 40 degrees in Hartford and New Haven.

While it was a VERY EXTREME YEAR, the area survived, and things got back to normal. It was a year that made it into the history books.

Windsor Locks' Four Movie Theaters

Burnap Block
Burnap Opera House



Central Hall
Central Theater

Princess Theater
Palace Theater
Blanche's Bowling Alley

Rialto Theater

Princess Theater started showing silent films in about 1910. Burnap Opera House showed silent films from 1910 - 1914. Princess Theater changed name to Palace Theater in 1917, and operated until 1921. Burnap Block became Central Hall in 1918, and its Central Theater showed films until 1922. The big, modern Rialto Theater opened in 1922. It remained the only movie theater in town until it closed in 1972.

Don LaRussa Created Dexter Plaza

Ashmere Inn, property for Dexter Plaza and LaRussa's Store - 1958.

Opening Day at Dexter Plaza - April 19, 1961

Don LaRussa

Don LaRussa had a shop on the corner of Oak and Main St., but needed a larger store. He bought a piece of the Ashmere lot and built it. He wanted to build an outdoor shopping center on the Ashmere lot. He got two local business-men to help him buy the lot, and then found a company to build the shopping center. It was one of the first in the area. It opened on April 19, 1961. It was a big and lasting success. Don was a visionary. He was way ahead of his time. He passed away in 1964. He left a legacy.

Dick Robinson's Friday Night Dances at the Knights of Columbus Hall

Dick Robinson

Knights of Columbus Home
332 Elm St. Windsor Locks, CT
Home of Dick Robinson's Friday Night Dances

The Friday night dances at the K of C hall, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, were crowded and exciting. Dick Robinson was the best-known and best-liked DJ in the area. He knew how to draw a crowd. He was a tall guy with an outsized personality. He was great with words. He knew how to relate to teenagers and to bands. He often brought great bands to the Friday night dances. They were "up and comers" who became big names, including Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs, Question Mark & the Mysterions, and the Cowsills.

Windsor Locks Wins 1965 Little League World Series

1965 Windsor Locks Little League World Champions
Front, L-R: Bob Creech, Mike O'Connor, Phil Devlin, Howie Tersavich, Steve Scheerer, Tom Billick.
Middle: Bruce Ackerlind, Wayne Arent, Ted Holmes, Bill Boardman, Bob Rumbold. Top Row: Coach Russ Mattesen, Mike Roche, Dale Misiek, Al Barrett, Fran Aniello, Dennis Dakin, Mgr. Bob O'Connor

50th Reunion in 2015

Front L-R:Bob Creech, Mike O'Connor, Phil Devlin Howie Tersavich, Steve Sheerer, Tom Billick, Middle:Mike Roche, Bruce Ackerlind, Ted Holmes Bill Boardman, Bob Rumbold. Back: Dale Misiek, Al Barrett, Fran Aniello, Dennis Dakin.

Team meets Mickey Mantle

Tom Billick, Bob Creech and Steve Sheerer return from Williamsport, PA.

1958 - When a $4,650 a year job bought you a $12,750 house and a $2,685 Implala, and your house had everything you need

In 1958, you only had one telephone, which was wired into the wall. You didn't have a cellphone or internet. You had a TV that got three channels, and went off at midnight. For dinner, the family sat together at the dinner table. Back in 1958, there was no Starbucks, and few fast-food places. For a treat, you went to McDonald's and had 15¢ hamburgers, 10¢ French Fries and 25¢ shakes.

ON THE OTHER HAND, medicine and dentistry are far more advanced **NOW** than they were back then. Now, we can call anyone in the world while riding in a car, and there are no more "person to person" calls. We don't drive with paper maps to get us to our destination. Our cell phone takes us anywhere - step by step, and it tells us when the police are up ahead. **History helps us gain perspective!!!** History doesn't fix the current world, but it can help us think about how we want to shape the current and future world. History is valuable, if we know and use it.

OF COURSE, CHANGING THE WORLD IS NOT EASY!!!!!!

WLHS "ACES HIGH" WON NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP IN 1999

Windsor Locks High School has a **FIRST** program. **FIRST** (**F**or **I**nspiration and **R**ecognition of **S**cience and **T**echnology) is a global nonprofit organization that inspires youth to pursue technical careers through robotics competitions. Founded in 1989, **FIRST** is the world's leading youth robotics community, providing robotics competitions that inspire learning and build confidence. it uses a sports-like model to teach high-schoolers how to design, build, program, and operate robots which can solve real-world problems. Engineers from local companies run the program at high schools, and local engineering firms support the program.

Dave Leenhouts started the FIRST program at WLHS in 1996. It is still going strong. The WLHS team merged with the Suffield High School team and formed a joint team, which is called **"Aces High"**. As of 2026, the team has:

- completed 29 years of participation
- participated in 99 events
- won 83 awards, and
- **been to the national championship 16 times.**

In 1999, the ACES HIGH team won the world championship. While it is called "The National Championship", it involves teams from all over the world. Below is a photo of the 1999 team that won the Championship.

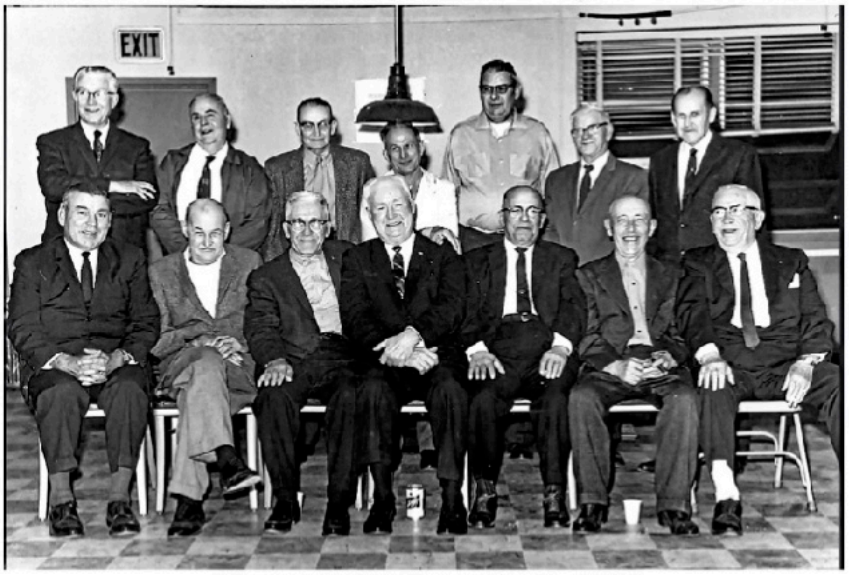
Windsor Locks And Suffield FIRST Robotics Team Won the National Championship in 1999

The Windsor Locks High School students on the 1999 FIRST Robotics team were:
Jason Bornas, Brian Peters, Adam Quagliaroli, Norman Goulet, Manish Dalwadi, Megan McDonald, Tom Cwickla, Keith Sevigny, Jared Linde, Doug Goodstein, Alan Wong, Ryan Kerick, Matt Rulnick, Beandon, Killenbeck, Candice Cwickla, Sam Sales, Lissa Larson, Chris Munson, Tony Donihee, Matt Perra, Justin Daley, Jay Ravalese, John Price, Casey Donihee, Kevin Derwin.

1966-67 Firemen's Old Timers Nights

1966 Firemen Old Timers Night: L-R. Joseph Halloran, Charles McCloskey, Joseph Dowd, Irving Ball, James Tambussi.

1966 Firemen Old Timers Night - L to R: Elmer Leary, Joseph Halloran, and Irving Ball



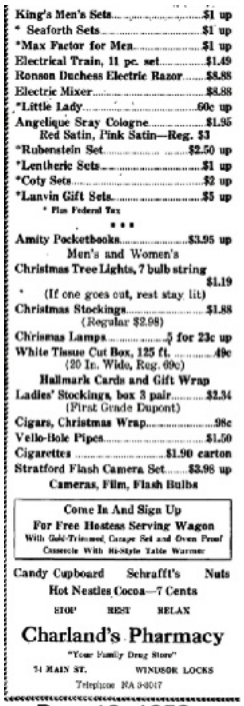
Firemen's Old Timers Night 1967
Seated L-R: Donald Hinkley, Charles Wallace, Charles Ciparelli, Elmer Leary, James Franklin, James Tambussi, Thomas Little.
Standing L-R: Joseph Halloran, Frederick Kennedy, Irving Ball, Joseph Calsetta, John Cane, Frank Silk, Fred Wallace

A&P at Church & Main Sts. 1927-1940

A&P. Church & Main Sts. 1927-1940

Aldo Satirana, Produce Manager of the
A&P at the corner of Chuch and Main Streets

1940 - A&P across from Train Station
A&P moved in 1940



King's Men's Sets.....$1 up
* Seaforth Sets.....$1 up
*Max Factor for Men.....$1 up
Electrical Train, 11 pc. set.....$1.49
Ronson Duchess Electric Razor.....$8.88
Electric Mixer.....$8.88
*Little Lady.....60c up
Angelique Sray Cologne.....$1.95
Red Satin, Pink Satin—Reg. $3
*Rubenstein Set.....$2.50 up
*Lentheric Sets.....$1 up
*Coty Sets.....$2 up
*Lanvin Gift Sets.....$5 up
* Plus Federal Tax
* * *
Amity Pocketbooks.....$3.95 up
Men's and Women's
Christmas Tree Lights, 7 bulb string $1.19
(If one goes out, rest stay lit)
Christmas Stockings.....$1.88
(Regular $2.98)
Chrismas Lamps.....3 for 23c up
White Tissue Cut Box, 125 ft.....49c
(20 In. Wide, Reg. 69c)
Hallmark Cards and Gift Wrap
Ladies' Stockings, box 3 pair.....$2.34
(First Grade Dupont)
Cigars, Christmas Wrap.....98c
Vello-Bole Pipes.....$1.50
Cigarettes.....$1.90 carton
Stratford Flash Camera Set.....$3.98 up
Cameras, Film, Flash Bulbs

Come In And Sign Up
For Free Hostess Serving Wagon
With Gold-Trimmed, Casape Set and Oven Proof Casserole With Hi-Style Table Warmer

Candy Cupboard Schrafft's Nuts
Hot Nestles Cocoa—7 Cents
STOP REST RELAX

Charland's Pharmacy
"Your Family Drug Store"
51 MAIN ST. WINDSOR LOCKS
Telephone RA 9-9017

Dec. 18, 1958

Meat and Grocery Money Savers for Saturday !

Rib-end Pork Chops....20c lb
Smoked Shoulders....15c lb
Sausage Meat....23c lb
Spare Ribs....15c lb
Sauer Kraut....3 lbs 23c
Hamburg....18c lb
Shoulder Steak....30c lb
Thick Rib Corned Beef 12c lb
Lamb Stew....2 lbs 25c
Veal Stew....15c lb
Lamb Patties....23c lb
Pot Roast....25-30c lb
Baby Beef Liver....15c lb

Boiling Beef....12c lb
Prime Roast Beef....30c lb
Land O' Lake Fowl....27c lb
Brookfield Butter....36c lb
Sugar, cloth bags...10 lbs 49c
Octagon Soap....2 bars 9c
Ivory Soap....5c bar
Prudence Hash....23c can
Forest Park Tomatoes
2 cans 25c
Heinz Soup....2 cans 25c
Bisquick....31c pkg.
Eagle Sardines....6 cans 25c

Forest Park Red Salmon
19c can
Molasses....29c qt. bottle
Cocoa....2 lb can 22c
Babo....2 cans 25c
Newgate Ginger Ale
2 bottles 25c
Prune Juice....22c qt. bottle
Noxon Silver Polish
22c bottle
Pineapple Juice....10c can
Downyflake Doughnuts
20c doz.

SISITZKY'S MARKET
THE STORE OF QUALITY & SERVICE
DELIVERY SERVICE 112 MAIN ST. PHONE 695 WINDSOR LOCKS

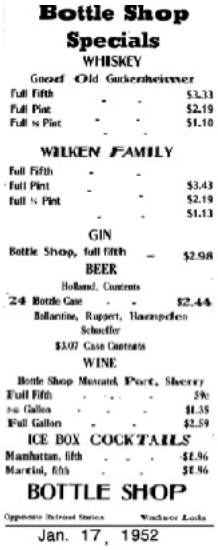
Jan. 18, 1935

D. F. LaRUSSA
BASEMENT SPECIAL!
SNOW CAP TIRES
640 x 16
$8.95
With Old Tire
D. F. LaRUSSA
170 Main Street Tel. 1083 Windsor Locks

Jan. 17, 1952

Subscribe For
The Journal
$1.50 per Year.
$1.25 if paid strictly In Advance.

Feb. 26, 1909



Bottle Shop Specials

WHISKEY
Gozzer Old Gukkersheimmer
Full Fifth - - $3.33
Full Pint - - $2.19
Full ½ Pint - - $1.10

WILKEN FAMILY
Full Fifth - -
Full Pint - $3.43
Full ½ Pint - $2.19
- - $1.13

GIN
Bottle Shop, full fifth - $2.98

BEER
Holland, Contents
24 Bottle Case - - $2.44
Ballantine, Ruppert, Haenspeken Schaeffer
$3.07 Case Contents

WINE
Bottle Shop Muscatel, Port, Sherry
Full Fifth - - - 59c
½ Gallon - - - $1.35
Full Gallon - - $2.59

ICE BOX COCKTAILS
Manhattan, fifth - - - $1.96
Martini, fifth - - $1.96

BOTTLE SHOP
Opposite Railroad Station Windsor Locks

Jan. 17, 1952

Ads from the Windsor Locks Journal

Drum Corps of Windsor Locks

Windsor Locks had many Drum Corps from 1900 to 1990.

1. Windsor ocks Fife,Drum and Bugle Corps (1900-1924)
2. Old Timers Drum and Bugle Corps (1919)
3. Windsor Locks Volunteer Fire Dept. Fife, Drum & Bugle Corps (1965-1991)
4. Old Engine No. 2 Fife and Drum Corps (1984 - 1991)
5. St. Mary's Fife and Drum Corps (1950s & 1960s)
6. The Conquistadors Drum Corps
7. The Golden Lancers Drum and Bugle Corps (1960s)
8. The Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps (1960s)

W.L. Volunteer Fire Dept Fife & Drum Corps

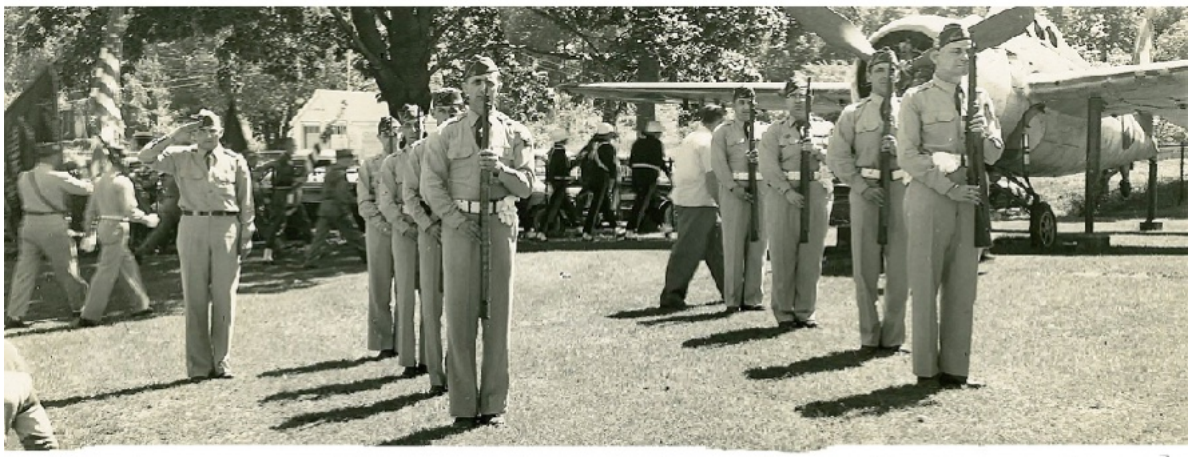
Old Engine #2 Fife and Drum Corps

St. Mary's Fife & Drum Corps at St. Mary's Park, 1955

Golden Lancers Drum Corps
Sharon Weatherbee, Robin Kaye

Aerial View of downtown Windsor Locks, CT, date unknown.
You can see the Bridge, Dexters, Montgomery Bldg, Main St, Rialto Theater in a "circle", A&P,, Coly's Hotel, Blanche's Bowling Alley Railroad Station, Canal.

Memorial Hall Grounds Had an Aircraft Twice



Airplane easily seen behind soldiers in formation.

Top of airplane can be seen above car at the center.

Average Wealth of Connecticut Towns & Cities

Every few years, the average family wealth of all towns and cities in Connecticut is published. From it, you can pick a town, and see which other towns or cities have a higher or lower "average family wealth" than your town. The numbers don't tell you why the average wealth of any of the towns changed. They just tell you how a town's average family wealthy compares to other towns.

Lets look at the average wealth of Windsor Locks families in four different years. Here is a look at Windsor Locks rankings from 1960 to 2018.

YEAR	RANK	Number of towns/cities in CT
1960	**63**	169
1970	**81**	169
1980	**111**	169
2018	**140**	178

From this, we can tell that the average wealth of WL families has been going down COMPARED to the other towns and cities in Connecticut. Here is a list of 8 towns and cities in Conn. in four different years from 1960 to 2018.

	1960	1970	1980	2018
Glastonbury	21	15	16	6
West Hartford	5	11	18	44
Suffield	98	42	63	61
Windsor	44	50	55	103
East Windsor	121	117	126	136
Windsor Locks	**63**	**81**	**111**	**140**
Enfield	87	86	104	146
Hartford	138	164	169	178

Over the years from 1960 to 2018, the number of towns and cities increased. You can tell that from the numbers that Hartford gets. It has usually been at the bottom of the list.

We see that Glastonbury has been near the top for all of these years. West Hartford has gone down, but not much. Not many of these towns have dropped in the rankings as much as Windsor Locks. Windsor has been pretty steady. Hartford has been steady at the bottom of the list.

There is no information in these lists as to WHY a town went up or down. These numbers can help the town government assess how the town is doing relative to the other towns and cities. More analysis can help them assess "why" their rank has changed. Bringing in new businesses can cause a town's ranking to rise. Bringing in more "Subsidized apartment rentals" will bring a town lower on the list. Essentially, towns with higher ranks will cause wealthier people to move into their towns. Towns which rank low are attractive to people with low incomes.

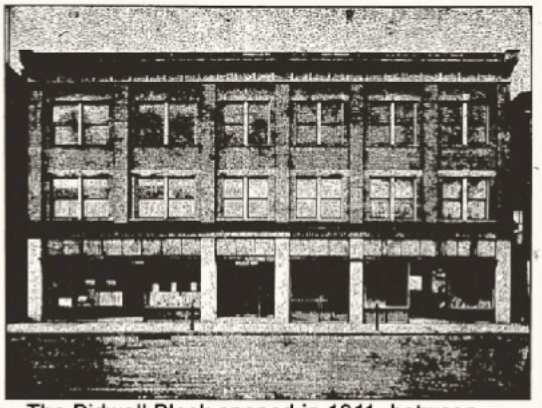
The F.S. Bidwell Stores

F.S. Bidwell's first store was in a house on the property of the F.S. Bidwell Lumber Yard on North Main Street which they bought in 1875.

In 1898, F.S. Bidwell's built their first real store on Main Street, across from the Freight Station. It was where the Brown Derby existed later, just south of the Tate house. Photo is below, on the left. That building was used until they built the "Bidwell Block" on Main Street, between Spring and Oak Streets in 1911. A photo is below, on the right. It housed both their lumber and their hardware businesses.

Later, they moved their lumber sales to Main Street, near Chestnut Street. See photo at lower right. Bidwell closed its business in 1960 after fires in both Main St. buildings.

F.S.Bidwell's 2nd store, from ~1898 to 1911. It was on the south side of the Tate Building, across from the Freight Station



The Bidwell Block opened in 1911, between Spring and Oak Streets.

Converse Block Bidwell Block

Bidwell Lumber Co. (Main & Chestnut Sts.)

The history of the F.S. Bidwell Co. is Chapter 17 of ***Windsor Locks History: Volume IV***, published by Mel Montemerlo in 2023.

Understanding Changes in Windsor Locks History

CHANGES IN THE U.S. - NOT JUST WINDSOR LOCKS
MAJOR DIFFERENCES IN FAMILY LIFE IN THE USA, NOT JUST WINDSOR LOCKS

1. **Family Structure**
   - 1950s
     - The "nuclear family" (father, mother, children) was the dominant model.
     - Traditional gender roles were strongly emphasized: the father as breadwinner, the mother as homemaker.
     - Divorce rates were relatively low.
   - 2020
     - Family structures are much more diverse: single-parent families, blended families, same-sex parent families, and cohabiting couples are common.
     - Gender roles are more fluid, with both parents often working and sharing household responsibilities.
     - Divorce is more common, though trends vary.
2. **Marriage and Parenthood:**
   - 1950s:
     - People married younger and had children earlier.
     - Having children was a central focus of family life.
   - 2020s:
     - People are marrying later, if at all, and having children later in life.
     - There's a greater emphasis on individual fulfillment and career goals before starting a family.
     - The choice to not have children is also more common.
3. **Women's Roles:**
   - 1950s:
     - Women's primary role was in the home.
     - Opportunities for women in the workforce were limited.
   - 2020s:
     - Women have significantly greater educational and career opportunities.
     - It's common for women to be equal or primary breadwinners.
4. **Technology:**
   - 1950s:
     - Limited technology in the home (e.g., television, telephone).
     - Social interaction was primarily face-to-face.
   - 2020s:
     - Ubiquitous technology (smartphones, computers, internet).
     - Technology plays a major role in communication, entertainment, and education, which can have both positive and negative effects on family dynamics.
5. **Social Values:**
   - 1950s:
     - Strong emphasis on conformity and traditional values.
     - Less open discussion of sensitive topics.
   - 2020s:
     - Greater acceptance of diversity and individuality.
     - More open communication about a wider range of topics.
6. **Economic Factors:**
   - 1950s:
     - A single-income household could often provide a comfortable middle-class lifestyle.
   - 2020s:
     - Often requires two incomes to maintain a comfortable lifestyle.
     - Economic inequality has increased.

Bill Savitt and His Peace of Mind Guarantee

Bill Savitt's Hartford store

In the 1950s, 60s and 70s, Windsor Locksers heard about Bill Savitt's "Peace of Mind Guarantee" (POMG) over the radio, and then on TV, almost continuously. Savitt's jewelry store was at 35 Asylum Street in Hartford. He operated that store for 68 years before retiring in 1986. He was a great businessman, and a good and generous person with an outsized personality and a love of sports. The photo on the right shows Bill, wiith Babe Ruth on his team.

Bill Savitt with Babe Ruth in 1945.

John Bissell's Ferry: A 280 Year Sensation

John Bissell's Ferry Boat (~1641 to ~1921)
Crossing Conn. River (Windsor - South Windsor)

When you consider the biggest business achievements in the history of Windsor and Windsor Locks, you will come across an amazing business that is not well known. It is the ferry boat that was designed and built by John Bissell, who lived in Windsor. **It was an incredibly simple system that worked very well for almost three centuries!!!**

John Bissell's ferry was a flat-bottomed barge without a motor, that crossed the Connecticut River, linking the settlements of Windsor and what is now South Windsor. It was amazing because of its simple, but highly efficient method of propulsion. Instead of using engines, oars, or sails, the ferryman attached the barge to a submerged cable anchored to both riverbanks. By angling the boat's rudder against the river's natural flow, the ferryman used the push of the water current to propel the boat back and forth across the river.

John Bissell built his ferry to move his family's livestock from the main Windsor settlement on the west side of the Connecticut river to the fertile, communal grazing pastures on the east side of the river. Building a bridge across the Connecticut River would have been much too expensive. **The ferry changed from a private farmer's boat to a public business on the major colonial trade route linking Boston, Hartford, and New York.**

The presence of the ferry greatly increased local economic development. **The timeline of the ferry spanned about 280 years (almost 3 centuries)!!!**

Local historical markers show 1641 as the ferry's first year, but historians can't agree on the exact year. The Bissell family had a monopoly on the lucrative river crossing for the first 100 to 150 years of its existence. The ferry ran until between 1921 and 1925. Finally it was made obsolete by modern steel bridges and automobiles. What started as a way for John Bissell to feed his cattle ended up opening up traffic between New York and Boston. Today, the legacy of John Bissell's Ferry lives on in the name of the **John Bissell Bridge** (I-291), which spans the Connecticut River just south of the original historic ferry site.

Windsor Locks Fish Hatchery:1892-1974

The Fish Hatchery was an important part of Windsor Locks life for more than three-quarters of a century, from 1892 to 1974. The Fish Hatchery was a popular place from its inception to about 1967. There were many retaining ponds which contained rainbow trout, lake trout, brook trout, and Atlantic salmon. The Hatchery was very productive. Many people came to visit, and look at the tanks of fish. Below are photos of the Superintendent's house, the Hatch House and the Rearing Pools.

Superintendent's House

The Hatch House - 1900

The Rearing Pools - 1900

By 1969, local feeling for the Hatchery had turned around. In 1972, the town bought the 56 acres of the Hatchery. Part of the land was turned into a recreation area which was called Spring Park. The house was rebuilt and it was rented out, but it burned down. The old brick structure that housed some of the tanks or the Fish Hatchery is long gone.

Five Windsor Locks Firemen Relaxing

Francis Gragnolati, Bob Wesowicz, Bill Reilly
Mike Rocconella, Dean Ribaudo

Burnap Mansion ~ 1880

The Burnap Mansion

Ruby Laird & "Bean" Burnap

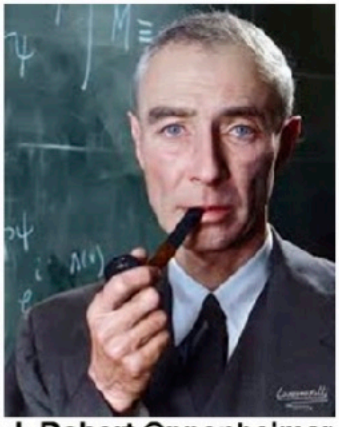
"Bean" Burnap by horse barn

Unidendified people by Burnap Mansion

The mansion was built in 1863 on a 100 acre lot. The estate was known as "Maple Hill". It was first owned by Lucius Chapman. After he died, the size of the lot was decreased, and it was purchased by Dr. Sidney R. Burnap in 1876. The drive from Main St. to the estate was known as "Burnap's Grove". Many socials and gatherings were held at the estate. It was the scene of "high society". Dr. Burnap died in 1901. His wife sold the property in 1914. The mansion still exists as of this writing in 2026. Dr. Burnap also owned the largest building on Main St. It was on the corner of Oak and Main Streets, and was known as "The Burnap Block".

Ettore F. Carniglia & J. Robert Oppenheimer

Dr. Ettore F. Carniglia
1904 -1970



J. Robert Oppenheimer

Ettore Carniglia, who became Windsor Locks' doctor and favorite son, went to college with J. Robert Oppenheimer, who led the development of the atomic bomb. They went to Harvard in the early 1920s. Out of the 1925 graduating class of 572 students, Oppenheimer and Carniglia were among the 15 students who graduated *Summa Cum Laude*. (with highest honors). While both possessed extraordinary minds, their backgrounds and life trajectories could not have been more different:

Ettore Francis Carniglia: The son of Italian immigrants, Carniglia grew up in the working-class town of Windsor Locks, Connecticut, where his parents worked factory and labor jobs. Unlike Oppenheimer, who leaned into the theoretical and global stage, Carniglia focused on medicine. He completed Harvard Medical School, graduating at the top of his medical class. After his internship, Dr. Carniglia went to Baltimore's Union Memorial Hospital. He left after 5 months because he felt that Baltimore had many doctors, while his hometown, Windsor Locks, was badly in need of a doctor. He returned to Windsor Locks, and set up a practice at 4 Oak Street. Dr. Carniglia also became the doctor for the County Home in Warehouse Point and the American School for the Deaf in West Hartford. He was appointed the Town Health Officer in 1933. In Windsor Locks, Dr. Carniglia worked 20 hour days, with no vacations. He held office hours, and made house calls every day.

J. Robert Oppenheimer: Raised in a wealthy, cultured Manhattan family, Oppenheimer finished his Harvard undergraduate degree in chemistry in just three years instead of four. Following graduation, he immediately left for Europe to study theoretical physics at the University of Cambridge and the University of Göttingen, setting off on the academic trajectory that would lead him to direct the Manhattan Project. He directed the project that developed the atomic bomb.

Two very very smart men went to college together and graduated with honors. They knew each other very well. One became his hometown's favorite son. The other developed the atomic bomb.

Center St. Ice Skating Pond & Swimming Pool

Ice skating rink - Center St. Warming shed at right.

Warming shed at Ice skating pond on Center St.

Down at the "bottom" of Center Street, near Whiton Street, there was a small plot of land that served as a swimming hole from about 1900 to about 1930, and as an ice skating pond from the 1930s to about 1960. As of this writing (2026), there are many who remember ice skating there. Ice skating at that pond was almost a "right of passage" in the mid 1900s. There was a little wooden shack on the side of the pond that had an old wood stove. It was a good place to put your ice skates on, to warm up, and to have a cup of hot cocoa.

The ice skating pond was taken care of by the Boy Scout Explorers, who would dam up a stream during the fall, so that a shallow pond would form. When there was ice, it was loaded with kids and some adults. A favorite game was the "whip", in which you would get a group of kids to hold hands and form a line. The kids on one end of the line would skate faster, and the one on the end would let go.

In an earlier time, that ice skating pond was a swimming pool. The August 7, 1933 issue of the Springfield Republican reported on an occurrence that ended its use as a swimming pool. On Aug, 6, of 1933, a young girl discovered the body of a young boy at the bottom of the pool just after the pool opened at 2.30 PM. His name was Francis Silk, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank J. Silk of Oak Street. The article does not give the name of the girl who found the boy

It was assumed that the boy went to the pool alone after noon, and got in by going under a high wire fence, after which he either fell from the diving board in the deeper section, or waded in beyond his depth. He was unable to swim. David Cameron was in charge of the pool that day. He recovered the body and found no signs of life. The Medical Examiner, J. A. Coogan, gave accidental drowning as the cause of the accident.

After that, the pool was never re-opened. It was filled with dirt. As stated above, there was a stream through it, which was later dammed up by the Boy Scout nExplorers each fall so that a shallow pond was formed for ice skating.

Some time after it stopped being used for swimming, a group of townspeople took up the mission of collecting enough funding to build a real swimming pool in what is now known as Pesci Park. They were successful.

Around 1960, the land that the ice skating pond was on was developed, and houses were built on and near it. That marked the end of the use of the place as an ice skating rink in the winter.

Main Street, Windsor Locks. Early 1970s
Most stores were closed a few years before this.
This was shortly before the stores were razed.

SMALL TOWN "CLAIMS TO FAME"

American towns and cities have long generated "Claims to Fame". You can find many of these by doing Internet searches. In the 1940s and 50s, you would see some of them on billboards. Here are some of them:

- Hershey, PA - world's largest piece of chocolate - 30,000 lbs.
- Death Valley, CA - hottest recorded atmospheric temperature
- Ruston, LA - world's largest peach cobbler. (2,251 lbs.)
- Timonium, MD - world's largest crab cake. - 300 pounds.
- Great Falls, MT - Home of the world's shortest river
- Stuart, FL - Sailfish Capital of the World
- DeLand, FL - Skydiving Capital of the World
- Tarpon Springs, FL - Sponge Capital of the world
- Metropolic, IL - Home of Superman
- Ames, IA - Largest Gnome in the World
- Haleyville, AL - First 911 Call
- Kansas City, KS - World's Largest Cap Gun
- Prescott, WI - World's Largest Bratwurst
- High Point, NC - World's largest Chest of Drawers
- Pearsonville, CA - Hubcap Capital of the World
- Waunakee, WI - Snowshoe Capital of the World
- Santa Clause, IN - America's Christmas Hometown
- Clarksdale, MI - Birthplace of the Blues
- Windsor Locks, CT - Only town in the US with a one-sided Main St.
- Windsor Locks, CT - Only town in the US named "Windsor Locks"
- Windsor Locks, CT - First Christmas tree

The function of "Claims to Fame" is to show pride in one's town. "Claims to Fame" have been studied by sociologists and social psychologists. They serve as a "feel good" phrase for the citizens of the town. None of them were officially claimed by the town's government. They symbolize town pride and uniqueness. Most of them are not testable, but that doesn't make any difference. They make the town seem more interesting and more important to visitors, and also to the townspeople.

Dark building on left is Central Hall. The awning on it is over Garbarino's store. The light building is The Windsor Locks Hotel, owned by Vito Colapietro, who is standing in front of it in a white apron. It has 3 stores. L-R are: Windsor Locks' New Market, which was Spinelli's Market, The Boston Store, which was Bianchi's shoe store, and Vito Colapietro's Ice Cream Store, which has a sign saying: Cigars, Lunch, Candy. On the extreme right is the edge of Moses Goldfarb's building. The photo was taken in 1927, the year after the fire which caused the hotel to be rebuilt. The awning in the upper left corner of the photo is on the Passenger Train Station. The photo was taken from under that awning.

Having fun at the Italian-American Club -1915

Anna Colapietro, 1915

Stella Colapietro, Anna Colapietro, and Angelina Gasparro in costumes they made from flags from cigar boxes.

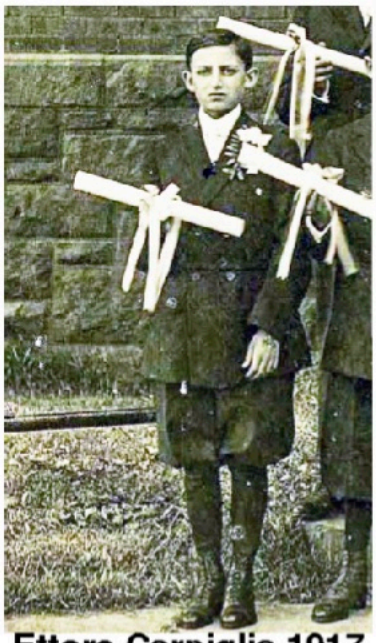
Italian immigrant women at the Italian American Club, 1915. Anna and Stella were wives of brothers, Vito and Leo Colapietro. Anna and Stella arrived in Windsor Locks in about 1910. In 1915, they were in their early 20s.

Photo taken at Canal Bank facing northbound toward Gabbs Special Products, also known as Crouse Hinds, Rossi, Darcy Saw, Horton Chuck, Country Artist, Etc.
Photo taken 1/11/2004 by Frank Baron

Main Street Between Church Street and Spring Street

Charlands' Pharmacy, Gurley's Music, Elm Press, Murphy.s Package Store

In Memory Of Dr. Ettore Carniglia



Ettore Carniglia 1917
St. Mary's Graduation

NORTH MAIN STREET IN 1892
The main route to Springfield, looking toward the present home of Dr. Ettore F. Carniglia.

Dr. Ettore F. Carniglia
1904 -1970

Joe "Red"Ambrosetti, Mrs. Carniglia,
Dr. Carniglia's mother, Anna & Vito Colapietro

Bradley Field People Mover

Automated “People Mover” built for
Bradley Field, Finished in 1976.
Never used. Stored in CT Trolley Museum.

1976 - An experimental monorail was completed to link the Bradley Field terminal to a parking lot seven-tenths of a mile away. The "people mover" cost $4 million to build. It was anticipated to cost $250,000 annually to operate. Due to the high anticipated operating cost, the monorail was never put in service, and was dismantled in 1984 to make room for a new terminal building.

Eight Windsor Locks Musicians

Laura Derwin

Bob Flick

Dianne Plante

Mike Gagliardi

Dan Tracey

Kathryn Morris

Jim Arnold

Tom O'Leary

Working On Tobacco at 14-15 Years Old

14 & 15 year old kids could not work in a store. The only alternative was to work on tobacco during the summers. Tobacco farmers such as the Christian brothers, bussed us both ways. Girls sewed tobacco leaves in the sheds, Boys hung the leaves to dry. Boys worked in the fields in teams of three - two “pickers” and a “dragger”. Most of us learned a few words of Spanish. After a few hours of work, you could peel a layer of black tar off of your hands. Up to the 1980s, this was a “rite of passage” for local kids. Farm trends changed and fewer workers were needed.

Famous Photo of Railroad Workers in Windsor Locks in 1939

Railroad Workers having lunch in Windsor Locks -1939

This image is a famous documentary photograph taken in September 1939 by Jack Delano, a prominent photographer for the Farm Security Administration (FSA). The FSA spent the late 1930s capturing the daily lives of American workers, and this captures a brief moment of respite for a railroad crew having lunch by the tracks. In the background, you can see the historic Windsor Locks Canal and the Connecticut River.

The styles of dress worn by these men are characteristic of the late Depression era and the turn of the decade:

- **The Fedora:** The man on the far left and the man sitting in the middle are wearing soft felt fedoras with pinched crowns and medium-width snap brims. This specific shape of casual, everyday fedora became ubiquitous for working-class men during the 1930s.
- **The Flat Caps (Newsboy/Eight-Panel Caps):** The two men on the right are wearing cloth flat caps. While these were introduced earlier in the century, the way they are worn here—slouched and paired with

Pesci Park History

The park on Center St., next to and behind St. Mary's Elementary School, has lived under a number of names: The Public Park, St. Mary's Park, and Pesci Park. Those of us who grew up in the 1940s, 50s and 60s went to the park almost every day during the summers, to take swimming lessons in the big public pool, and then to do crafts in the green wooden building behind St. Mary's School, and to play on the swings and teeter-totters (see-saws). There was a basketball court, on which movies were shown on some evenings, and dances were held. There were adults to teach us how to make crafts in that old green wood building. There were contests for best decorated bicycle, and countless other things. Behind all of this was "the woods" which had a few paths down to the stream.

What is the history of Pesci Park? Prior to 1920, people used this area as a park. Part of the park was owned by the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Co., and the part was owned by the Coffin family that owned the C.H.Dexter. Co.. When the railroad company stopped planning for "the western spur", it offered to sell the land to the town. The town bought the two parts of the park from the railroad company and the Coffin family. The ball field was dedicated in 1928. A grandstand was built. In the 1950s, the park was named Pesci Park, after Frank Pesci, a former Parks Commissioner. In the early 2000s, more improvements were made, and a new concession stand was built. Pesci Park remains an important part of Windsor Locks recreation system. BUT THE FLAVOR AND USE OF THE PARK HAS CHANGED IMMENSELY OVER THE LAST CENTURY.

Remember taking "Home Ec." in high school ?

1960 WLHS Homemaking Club

C. Gledich, N.Lusa, D. Ostien, D. Seymour, P. Murzin, N. Murphy, J. Kowalski, M.Yanish, B. Markiewicz, A. Hayden, D. Lanati, G. Micha, P. Iskrazak, B. Ferreri, Advisor: V. Christensen.

When did WLHS have its first baseball team?

A search of the archives of the Windsor Locks Journal provided a START in answering this question. The first mention of a WLHS baseball team that was found in the WLJ was in the April 4, 1916 WLJ, saying: "The High School baseball team played its first game of the season at Thompsonville Wednesday afternoon, and was beaten by a score of 8 to 3." In 1916 and in later years, there were articles in the WLJ on the WLHS baseball team. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THERE WAS NO WLHS BASBALL TEAM BEFORE 1916. It only means that the WLJ didn't mention it. WLHS may have files on it. A photo of the 1926 WLHS baseball team was found in the June 18,1926 issues of the WLJ. Here it is:

WINDSOR LOCKS HIGH SCHOOL BASEBALL TEAM
Back Row—Huntley, rf., p.; Gatti, cf.; Montagna, lf.
Front Row—Karges, rf.; J. Kennedy, p.; Lawson, 3b., (Mgr.); Micha, ss., (Capt.); O'Leary, 1b.; F. Kennedy, c.; McHugh, 2b.

Lower Grove Street - Then and Now

Lower Grove Street

Blanche's Bowling alley

Goldfarb's rentals over Shonty's

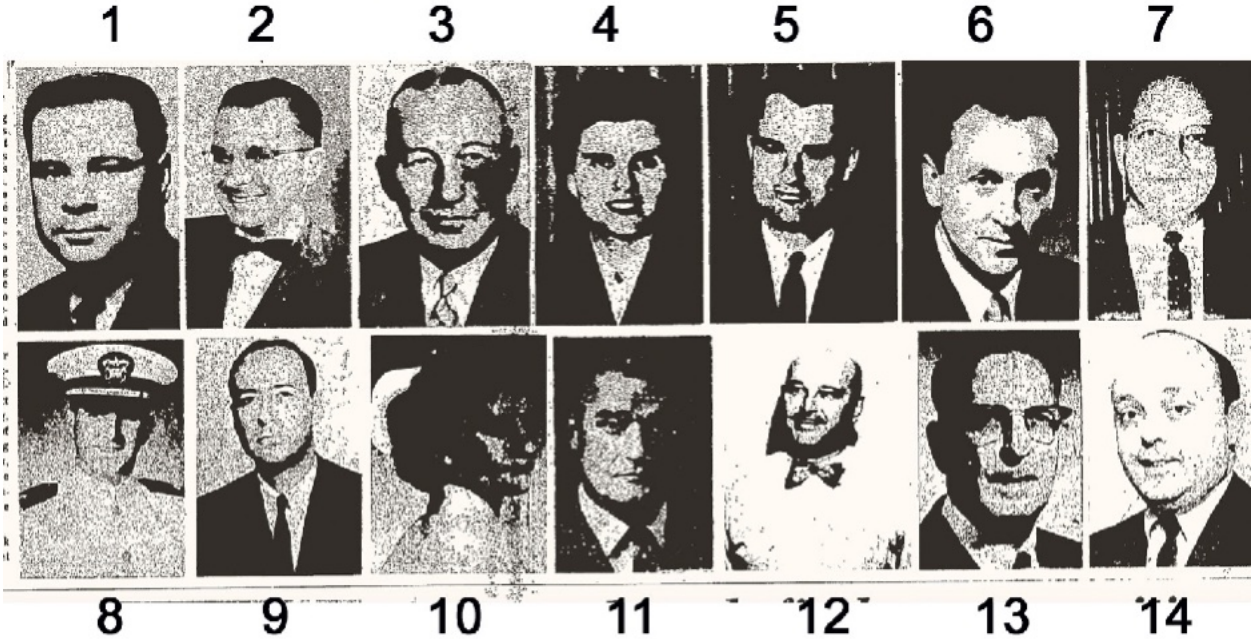
First National Bank of Windsor Locks

Interior of First National Bank

First National Bank of Windsor Locks
Decorated for Christmas

The First National Bank of Windsor Locks was on the corner of Main and Spring Streets.

Can you identify these Windsor Locks Citizens?



This set of photos was on the front page of the Windsor Locks Journal of May 9, 1974, but without names. The Journal was getting rid of the outdated "print blocks" for these photos. It was giving away the print blocks to anyone who might want them. It said that these 14 people had been in the news in Windsor Locks It would be nice to identify the individuals in the photos. Please answer with any possibilities you can think of, even if you are not sure. Your answer may help someone else. Thank you very much.

Here are the results of the feedback on the names of the individuals in the photos. 1. Bill Leary, 2. Ray Roncari, 3. Mike Sartori, 4. Irma Olivi, 5. Tony Ward, 6.unknown 7. Jimmy Franklin, 8. Finton Wallace, 9 Bob Pavia, 10. Lorraine Ginocchio Pearce 11. Bill Bromson, 12. George Wallace 13. Mario "Woody' DelFavro, 14. Bob Santamaria.

Four Windsor Locks Main Street photos from about the 1960s

Photos from Frank Baron

Francis Gragnolati, Bob Wezowicz, Bill Reilly,
Mike Rocconella and Dean Ribaudo

Russell Jubrey

Ed Savino, Walt Shea
Art Ciparelli,George Quagliaroli

Windsor Locks Police Dispatch Office.
L-R: Sergeant William Gifford,
unknown male, Fire Chief Jack Colli,
First Selectman Edward Savino,
Police Chief Bernard (Lucky) Kulas,
Seated is Dispatcher, Sandy Bernardi.
1981

Police commissioner Bernie Seaha,
Sgt. Russ Shelto, Sgt. William Gifford,
Chief J.Henry Whitten 1968

Ed Savino sworn in by Jim Rabbett,
witnessed by Mrs. Asselin

Main Street Between Church Street and Spring Street

Charlands' Pharmacy, Gurley's Music, Elm Press, Murphy.s Package Store

Christmas - Hartford 1969

Hartford, Conn. Christmas 1969

Christmas in Windsor Locks has long meant shopping in Hartford and Springfield. G. Fox and Steigers have long been staples for Christmas shopping. The details change over the decades, but Christmas decorations and snow in the city have provided delightful times for Windsor Locksers. Times are changing. In the 1950s, 60s and 70s, the "department stores" reigned supreme for Christmas shopping. Then the large outdoor Malls reigned supreme at Christmas. Now in the 2020s, shopping on-line, much of it at Amazon.com reigns supreme. But change never stops. That's why history helps us see our lives in the context of change.

Windsor Locks' Railroad Freight Terminal

1865 Grey Freight section Depot is Freight About Manager's 1900 office

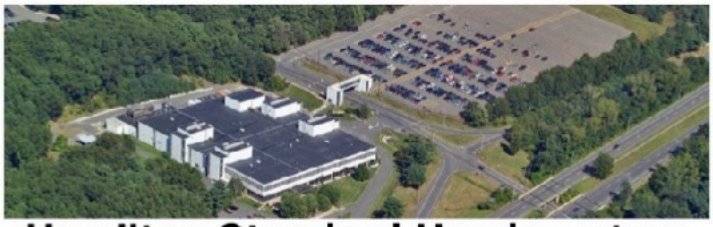
1865 Freight Terminal

About 1907 1875 Passenger Terminal

~1970 Passenger Terminal 1938 Freight Terminal

Windsor Locks' first train station was a Freight Terminal. It was needed to support the new and growing manufacturing plants along the canal. The canal was finished in 1829. Windsor Locks became a town in 1854. The first Freight Terminal was built about 1865. A freight terminal was needed for the mills to obtain raw materials, and to distribute products made by the mills. The Passenger Terminal was built in 1875. The first Freight Terminal was destroyed by a hurricane in 1938. It was was a brick structure, which had an octagonal section on its south end. It was the Freight Master's office. That office was not completely destroyed. It was incorporated into the new Freight Terminal, which was built out of wood in 1938, The new Freight Terminal served its purpose well. However, it was destroyed by a fire caused by a lightning strike in 1978. By that time, the manufacturing mills were dying out . The United States was moving from a manufacturing economy to a service economy. There was no need to rebuild the Freight Terminal.

History of Hamilton Standard



Hamilton Standard Headquarters

Hamilton Standard was formed in 1929 by the **United Aircraft and Transport Corporation (UATC),** which merged two bitter rivals: **Hamilton Aero Manufacturing** (Milwaukee) and the **Standard Steel Propeller Company** (Pittsburgh)**.** A breakthrough occurred in 1933, when Chief Engineer Frank Caldwell won the prestigious Collier Trophy for developing a revolutionary controllable-pitch propeller. The second breakthrough was the **Hydromatic propeller**, which allowed pilots to "feather" (stop) a damaged engine's rotation to save the aircraft. After short stints in Pennsylvania and East Hartford, the **massive demand** prompted a relocation. In 1952, Hamilton Standard opened its flagship plant in Windsor Locks, CT. It was situated right next to Bradley Field.

Big changes came in the 1950s through the 1970s. The opening of the Windsor Locks facility coincided with the dawn of the jet age. As traditional propeller demand declined, the company brilliantly pivoted its engineering focus.
1. **Jet Controls**: The plant began manufacturing highly accurate, mechanical fuel-metering controls for early jetliners like the Boeing 707 and Douglas DC-8.
2. **Life Support and Space**: Hamilton Standard partnered with NASA. The Windsor Locks engineers designed and built the **Portable Life Support System (PLSS)** backpacks worn by Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin during the 1969 Apollo 11 Moon landing, alongside the vacuum-coated 24-karat gold lunar visors.
3. **Aircraft Systems**: It created Environmental Control Systems to regulate cabin pressure, air quality, and temperature for commercial and military aircraft.

Then the Digital Evolution of the 1980s and 1990s occurred, and the company transitioned from mechanical hardware to digital systems. Three mergers occurred in the 1999-2018 years. The Hamilton Standard name eventually faded through corporate consolidation. However, its industrial footprint in Windsor Locks remains massive. Here is a list of major events and mergers:
[1929] **Hamilton Standard Propeller Co.** was formed.
[1952] Windsor Locks, CT plant opened.
[1999] It merged with Sundstrand Corp. and became **Hamilton Sundstrand.**
[2012] It merged with Goodrich Corp. and became **UTC Aerospace Systems.**
[2018] It merged with Rockwell Collins and became **Collins Aerospace.**

Today (2026) the historic facility at **1 Hamilton Road** operates under the name of **Collins Aerospace** (a subsidiary of Raytheon Technologies/RTX). It continues to be an active aerospace hub, specializing in modern flight controls, environmental systems, and military life-support technology.

The FullKrew Band

FullKrew Band

Jeff Doyle (bass), Joe Mazza (guitar), Rodrigo Clement (singer), Gary DiFederico (drums), Harvey Jacobson (guitar).

Joe Mazza -Guitar solo

FullKrew 1986

Harvey Jacobson and Joe Mazza - 2010

Terrible Circus Fire in Hartford, July 6, 1944

The worst circus fire in American history took place in Hartford, CT on July 6, 1944. Over 30 people from Windsor Locks were at that performance. Some were injured. The fire spread quickly because of new tent material that had been coated with water-proofing chemicals which caused fire to spread quickly. Over 100 people were injured. The aftermath of the fire was was terrible. People could not find their loved ones after getting away from the fire. Dr. Ettore Carniglia's wife had taken their two children to that performance. His wife and daughter remained together and were not hurt, but their son got separated from them. Dr. Carniglia went to the scene of the fire, but did not find his son until the next morning. Luckily he was unharmed. It is estimated that at about 167 people were killed in that fire. The cause of the fire was never determined. Ringling Brothers paid out about $4M to families of the injured and dead. That is about the same as $50M in 2025. This happened near the end of World War II.

Hendrick Rodimore and the Christmas Tree Claims

Dr. Henry R. Stiles wrote the histories of Windsor, CT and surrounding towns in four books in the years: 1859, 1863, 1891, and 1892. He told us of a man named Hendrick Roddimore, who was a Hessian soldier who fought alongside British Troops in the Revolutionary War. He told us that Mr. Roddimore was captured by American troops in the battle in Bennington, VT in 1777. Many Hessians were captured in that battle. The American troops marched them from Bennington, VT to Boston, MA. Along the way, they dropped off the Hessians at towns who agreed to take them. The Hessians who The Hessians who had not been dropped off on the way to Boston, were kept in Boston until 1781. when they were marched from Boston through a number of states. They dropped off groups of the Hessians at towns that would take them.

In his 1892 book, Dr. Stiles said that Roddemore had been dropped off by the American military along with other prisoners, in 'Windsor / East Windsor'. The military kept records on when and where each group of Prussian captives were dropped off. The records are found in http://history.rays-place.com/ct/convention-troops.htm, which says that the drop-off of Hessian prisoners in "Windsor - East Windsor" occurred in 1781. In his 1891 book, Dr. Stiles said that Mr. Rodimore moved to what is now Windsor Locks, and got a farming job with Samuel Denslow, who owned the farm that is now the Noden/Reed park.

Since the Prussian prisoners were dropped off in East Windsor / Windsor in 1781, he couldn't have gotten to the Denslow property before 1781.

On Christmas Day of 1955, Ms. Gladys Reed put an article in the Hartford Courant, which said that **Mr. Roddimore put up the first Christmas tree in Connecticut in 1777**. She provided no proof.

In 1983, Joe Bonito put up a large carved stone on the grounds ot the Noden Reed Park, claiming that Hendrick Roddemore had put up the **"First Decorated Christmas Tree in New England"** in 1777. No information could be found on the basis for that claim.

The people who made these claims found about the existence of Hendrick Roddemore from Dr Stiles' 1859 book, but they apparently didn't read Dr. Stiles' statement in his 1892 book saying that Roddemore was dropped off in Windsor / East Windsor, which military records say happened in 1781. Obviously, the two Christmas Tree claims are false. We know from military records that Mr. Roddemore didn't make it to Mr. Denslow's farm until at least 1781.

Indian Fair, Windsor Locks 1941

Windsor Locks held an Indian Fair in September and October of 1941, during WWII. Such Indian Fairs were common at the time. They were a way for Indian tribes to bring in needed money. There was no mention of the fair in the Windsor Locks Journal. The photos were taken by the U S..Office of War, and were found in the Library of Congress. Information on town history is often only available outside of the town.

Hi-G Inc. in Windsor Locks - History

Aerial View of Hi-G Inc.
Spring St & Route 75 ~ 1965

The Hi-G company was a notable military defense contractor and electronics manufacturer that operated in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, for over 40 years before its abrupt collapse in the mid-1990s. Founded in 1953, the company capitalized on the post-World War II regional economic boom centered around Bradley International Airport, and specialized in high-reliability components for aerospace and defense systems.

Hi-G grew alongside regional giants like Hamilton Standard and Kaman Aircraft, transitioning Windsor Locks' economy away from traditional canal-side paper mills toward cutting-edge tech manufacturing. At its peak, Hi-G was a major employer in the Windsor Locks area, supporting hundreds of local technical and assembly workers.

During the 1980s, Hi-G shifted through three separate ownership changes before landing as a subsidiary of New Jersey-based Nytronics Inc., which was managed under a holding company called EY Holdings. The early 1990s brought steep reductions in United States military defense spending. Battered by the shrinking market for military products, Hi-G suffered heavy operational losses.

Just months after securing state funding for a planned move, the company filed for bankruptcy and shut down completely in late 1994, laying off about 360 employees. The abandoned properties faced over $1.5 million in tax and environmental liens until local development groups and foreclosure proceedings finally stepped in during the 2010s to clean up the toxic remnants of the manufacturing era.

Mills Along the Canal Prior to 1909- Part 2

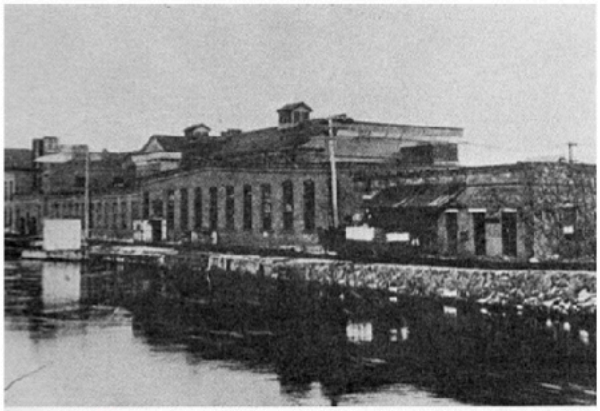
THE E. HORTON & SON CO.
Lathe Chucks

Medlicot Co.
Worsted & Wollen Underwear

Montgomery Co.

J.R. Montgomery Co.

Northern Connecticut Light & Power Co.



THE WINDSOR PAPER COMPANY
Division of The American Writing Paper Company

These photos are from the booklet: "*A Brief Account of the Windsor Locks Canal: Bicentennial Project 1776-1976*" by Edward E. Lanati, who said he got the photos and information from a booklet published by the Windsor Locks Journal in 1909.

Montgomery Buildings 1895 - 2025

Montgomery Mill Apartments - 2025

J.R.Montgomery Co -1976

Montgomery Bldg. Construction -1921

Montgomery Co. Buildings -1935

J.R.Mont. Warp Mills 1 & 2 - 1905

J.R.Mont. Novelty Mills 1 & 2 - 1901

J.R. Montgomery Buildings - 1895

Windsor Locks Passenger Station Evolution

Windsor Locks Passenger Station ~1905

Windsor Locks Passenger Station 1940

Windsor Locks Railroad Station - 1967

Passenger Station at its worst

Passenger Station 2025

Fire Chief Jim Carroll ~1959

Jim Carroll ~ 1920

Jim Carroll was an important and well-liked man in Windsor Locks. He had his own Pharmacy and Ice Cream Store across from Dr. Carniglia's office, and he was the Chief of the Fire Department. A delightful photo of him as a child in 1920 was found, and is shown on the right.

Windsor Locks "Collegians" beat N.Y. Yankees including Babe Ruth

In the early 1920s, professional baseball leagues had been formed, but the teams were not able to pay the players well. The leagues let the teams play games against teams from towns and cities in order to earn more money for their players. A Springfield man, named Jack O'Hara, came to Windsor Locks and figured out a way to have such games in Windsor Locks. He talked Pietro Paganelli, a farmer on the southern end of Windsor Locks into building a stadium for such games. The ballpark was called "South End Park". The field was just west of where the Amtrak line passes under River Road (Route 159). He organized games between professional baseball teams and a Windsor Locks team made up mostly of players from Holy Cross College. They were called "The Collegians" or "The Windsor Locks team". This practice went on from 1920 to 1924. It was stopped in 1925.

In a an exhibition game on June 29, 1924 at at the stadium on Pietro Paganelli's farm, the Windsor Locks team defeated the New York Yankees 3–2. The Windsor Locks Journal provided information on the game. Babe Ruth was the main attraction. The Windsor Locks pitcher, Mr. Clements, pitched a great game. The Yankee pitcher, Mr. Pipgrass pitched well until the 8th inning, when the Collegian's Malone walked, Benoit singled and Duffy hit a home run. Keating, of the Collegians, robbed Babe Ruth of a home run with a great catch. The family names of some of the Windsor Locks team members were: Duffy, Clements (pitcher), Keating (outfielder who robbed Babe Ruth of a home run, Benoit, Malone, and Bob Creech, who was known as "Kreech" or "Kre". After the game, Babe Ruth autographed three baseballs and gave them to the Windsor Locks Knights of Columbus.

New York Yankees 1924

Windsor Locks Collegians 1924

Barkhampsted Reservoir. Superbly beautiful in Autumn, but well worth visiting anytime of the year. Only 23 miles from Windsor Locks. Take photos of your family and friends with this background!!!!

Riverside Park and Windsor Locks

Riverside Park, Agawam, Mass.

Riverside Park Roller Coaster

July 3,1976

In the 1950s and 1960s, Riverside Park was a great place for WIndsor Locksers to go. Entry to the park was free and parking was free. They had a great set of rides, amusements, and a big roller rink. On weekend nights, there was much excitement at their race track. There were races, and demolition derbies. In 1990, it was sold, and it became "Six Flags New England", which was and is quite expensive. Things changed.

Post-1950 Windsor Locks Ice Cream Stores

Tony's Soda Shoppe - 1950

Jim Carrol's Pharmacy & Ice Cream

DEXTER PLAZA
- Dougherty Drug Ice Cream Counter
- Friendly's was to the right of this photo/

Friendly's near Bradley Field

Tailwinds Ice Cream

Dairy Cream

Train Station Trolley Hotel
Main Street 1904

Train Station
Main Street 2022
Photo taken from same spot 118 years later.

Kettle Brook Athletic Club House

Kettle Brook Athletic Club, Center St. 1930s-40s

There was an old Kettle Brook Athletic Club building on Center Street that existed in the 1930s and 40s. It was for adult men. They had baseball and basketball teams. The following photos are from the 1946 Baseball team.

Kettle Brook Athletic Club baseball team - 1946

Bill Poggi -Captain, George Biardi -Coach, Tony Taravella - Manager, Jasper Maltesi - Asst. Mgr. 1946

There once was a similarity between downtown Las Vegas and downtown Windsor Locks.

Louis Molinari's Confectionary Store

~1915 Horse & Buggy by Louis Molinari's Confectionary Store, across from the Freight Station, at the bend in Main Street

GREAT SALE OF

Fruits, Candies, Canned Goods

FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

at the Windsor Locks Fruit Store,

Opposite Freight Depot.

The largest, finest and most comfortable shopping center in town. Everything attractive, combining good quality, freshness and cheap prices

A fancy calendar, beautifully engraved and artistically colored, will be be given to the purchaser of a dollar's worth or more of goods.

Spanish Malaga Grapes, per lb.,	18c
Malaga Raisins, per lb.,	8c
Concord Grapes per basket,	20c
Catawba Grapes, "	20c
Figs, per pound,	16c
Prunes, "	8 to 10c
Dates, "	7c
Nuts of all kinds, per lb.	16 to 23
Navel oranges, per doz.,	20 to 40c
Bananas, "	15 to 20c
Baldwin apples, per peck,	50c
Russet " "	50c
Christmas candy, per lb ,	13c
Popcorn balls, per doz ,	10c
Candies of all kinds, per lb.,	8 to 40c
Holly Wreath,	15c

If you don't want to buy, call just the same to see the big display.

LOUIS MOLINARI.

Louis Molinari was an early immigrant from Italy. By 1901, he had a confectionary store on Main Street, across from the Freight Station. The horse is facing the front of the store. By 1901, he had a confectionary store at the bend of Main Street. On the left is a 1901 ad for his store. As time went by, he added more types of items for sale. He added flowers. He added record players and records in 1908, and ice cream in 1915. The ice cream sign in the photo indicates the photo was from 1915 or later. He added toys and games. He closed his store in 1925. Later, sold plants and vegetables. He died in 1949. This information is from the Windsor Locks Journal.

Santa Lands in Windsor Locks 12-2-1948

Santa's Helicopter lands at Windsor Locks

Santa's Kaman helicopter has landed

Don LaRussa and Santa (Fred Barberi

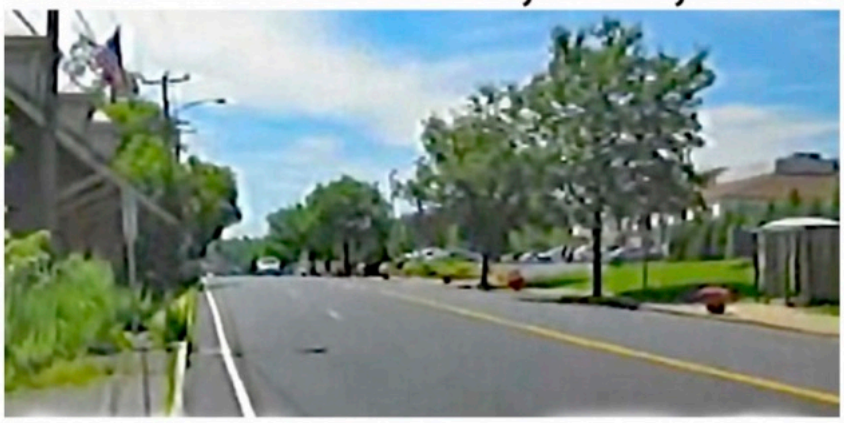
Crowd awaits Santa at LaRussa store

Don LaRussa brought Santa Claus to Windsor Locks in a Kaman helicopter on Dec. 2, 1948. Fred Barberi was Santa. He landed at the High School. Hartford Times estimated that half of the town's 5000 residents were there. There was a parade from there to Don's store, where Santa gave presents to the kids. Before Windsor Locks, Santa landed at the County Home in Waraehouse Point, where Santa had presents for all of the kids.

South side of Spring St., down to Main St.

On the South corner of Main and Spring St, the First National Bank was on the first floor. On the second floor was Dr. Elbergas and Brett's Insurance. Further up Spring St. was Peter Shykula's Barber Shop, and Maria's Meats & Groceries, which was owned by Maria Casinghino. Farther up the hill was the Telephone Company building.

Main Street- 1880,1965,1997



Main Street about 1997

Main Street about 1965

Main Street about 1880

Mills Along the Canal Prior to 1909 - Part 1

C.H.Dexter & Sons
Paper Mill

The Medlicott Company
Worsted & Wollen Underwear

George P. Clark Co.
Trucks, Casters, Fans

Windsor Silk Co.
Spool Silk Mfg.

Anchor Mills Paper Co.

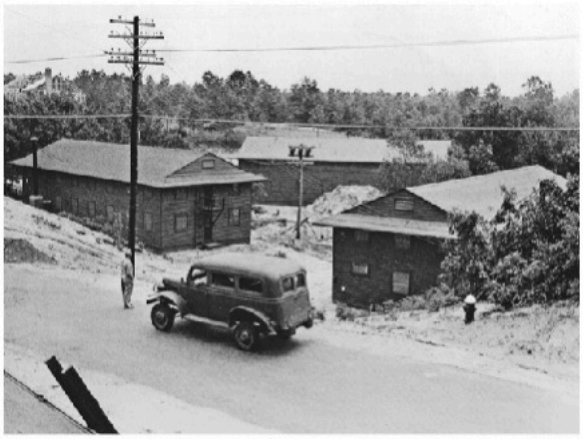
Windsor Locks Machine Co.
Paper Mill & Steam Laundry Machines

Windsor & Farist Steel Mill

Windsor Locks Machine Co.
Paper Mill & Steam Laundry Machines

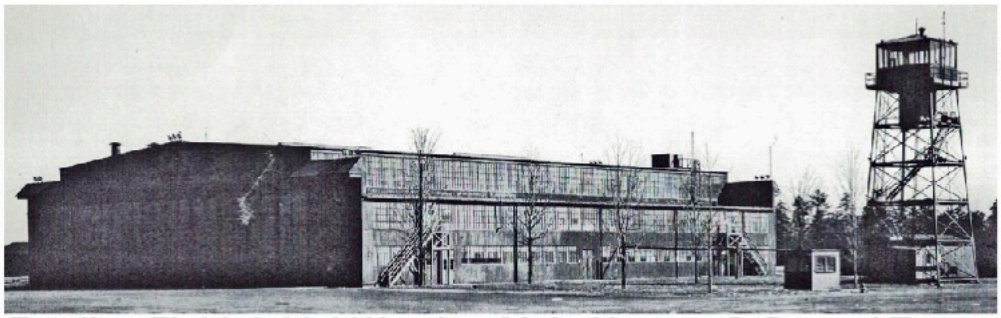
St. Mary's Elementary School - about 1957 - 47 students with one unpaid teacher who had control of the classroom, and the FULL SUPPORT of the parents. The students thrived. The reason this is no longer possible is obvious. Now, many public-school teachers are quittting, across the nation. We now have police in public schools full-time.

Bradley Field During WWII

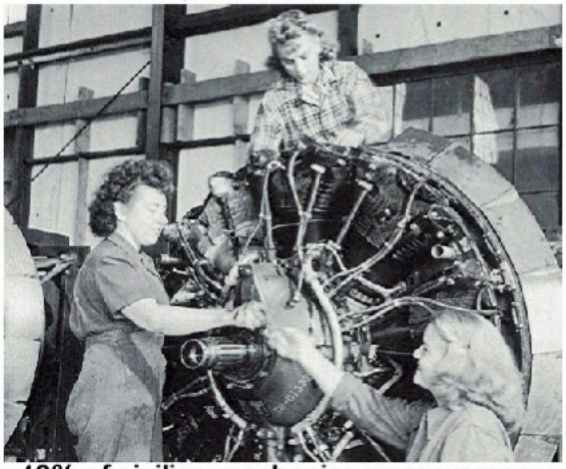


Bradley Field's Original Skunk Hollow Barracks, 1941

Bradley Field Entrance - Route 75 & Spring St



Bradley Field: Initial Wooden Main Hangar & Control Tower



40% of civilian mechanics were women.
Bradley Field, about 1943

German Prisoners of War repairing fence
at Bradley Field 1944

Fournier Boat Livery Business from 1950s and 60s

William and Baptistina Fournier ran a boat livery business when they lived on South Main St. (now called River Rd.) in Windsor Locks. They rented boats all day to folks fishing for shad which were coming up the river to spawn. Baptistina loved to take photos of the anglers and their catches of the day. Here are some of their photos from the 1950s and 60s,

Prizes Awarded For Park Contests

Closing exercises at the public park playgrounds were held last Thursday afternoon, and events at the swimming pool were conducted in the early evening. The various prize awards were announced by judges as follows:

Doll carriage parade: Prettiest, Corrine Ouellette; second, Jane Doyle, third, Irene DelFavaro, most original, Vito Colapietro. Bicycle parade: Prettiest, Nancy Frost; original, Melvin Montemerlo. Tricycle parade: Prettiest, Robert Daniels; second, James Logan. Wagon parade: Prettiest, James Downes; most orignal, Lynn Casey.

Costume parade: Prettiest, Susan Grady; funniest, Rita Crowley; most original, Elaine Ouellette. Hat parade: Prettiest, Joyce Michaj; funniest, Patricia Kennedy; most original, Patricia Samuelrich. Pie eating contest, 5 to 9 years group, Douglas Quagliaroli; 10 to 14 years group, William Wegrzyniak.

Crafts awards—3 to 7 years group: John Kennedy, Jane Doyle, Irene DelFavaro, Betty Logan, Phyllis LaRussa, Ellen Taravella, Robert Pastormerlo, Sharon Root, Ronald Quagliaroli; 8 and 9 years group: Susan Grady, Phyllis Quagliaroli, Patricia Kane, Jane Taravella, Donna Scotto, Clair Gallerani, Susan Root, Nancy Frost, Melvin Montemerlo; 11 to 13 years group: Patricia Samuelrich, Georgine Blaney, Judy Gallerani, Karlene Ciparelli, Marilyn Kennedy, Patricia Kennedy, John Lee, Virginia Kane. Bean guessing contest, Robert Aleson, who guessed 500, thee being 63 in the jar.

There were more than seventy entries for the various contests, while more than two hundred children and adults attended the exercises which were in charge of Miss Nancy Redway, supervisor of children's activities at the park The judges were Mrs. Norris J. King, Mrs. William McCue, and Mrs. Albert Redway.

At the swimming pool the following events were held and prizes awarded: Boys' races, ages 7-8; Tommy Kane, first; Richard Colo, second; ages 9 and 10, Bernard Hanson, first; Peter Campbell, second; ages 11 to 13, William Wegrzyniak, first, Robert Nevich, second; ages 14 to 16, Edward Young, first; Robert Levesque, second. Girls' races, ages 9 to 11, Karlene Ciparelli, first; Many Ann Paluck, second; ages 12 to 14, Gloria Zetteholm, firs; Sarah Wallace, second.

Novelty races—Balloon race won by Sarah Wallace; relay race, winning team, Patricia Kennedy, Dale Harris, Robert Fuller, Gloria Zetterholm, Robert Oliva and Bernard Hanson.

Graduation certificates were presented the following for completing courses in swimming during the past two months: Swimmer, Madelyn Bollea; intermediate, Bernard Hanson, James Fitzpatrick, Robert Lee, Terry Grow, Sarah Wallace, Patricia Lynch, Phyllis Quagliaroli, Dale Harris; beginners, Carol Hannifin, John Lee, Harold Sutton, Patricia Kennedy, Honore Schaefer, Declan Schaefer, Richard Colo, Thomas Kane, John Meehan, Elaine Ouellette, Melvin Montemerlo, Malcolm Bermani, William Queen, Diane Flynn, Ronald Bianchi and Mary Crowley.

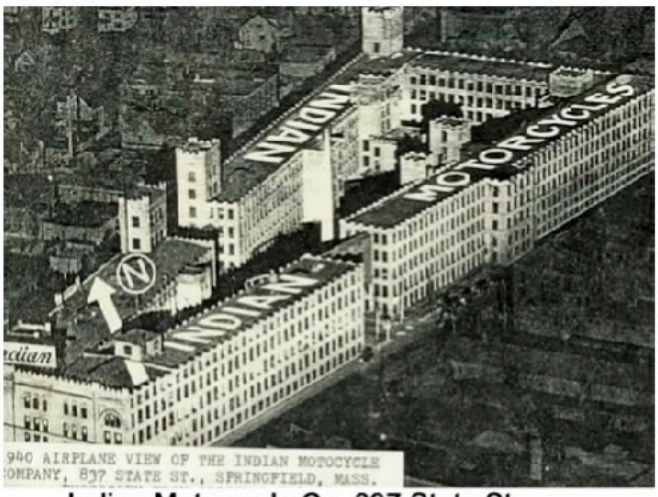
Public Park Playground Awards
Windsor Locks Journal, Sept. 4, 1952

Main St. Needed More Parking Spaces in the 1940s

Near-by Historic Factories that Changed the World

Colt Armory in Hartford

Underwood Typewriter Factory in Hartford



Indian Motorcycle Co.,837 State St.,
Springfield, MA 1940

Memories of Growing Up In Windsor Locks In The 1950s

The following is the memory of someone growing up in Windsor Locks in the 1950. It was posted on Facebook in 2020. IT BRINGS BACK GREAT MEMORIES.

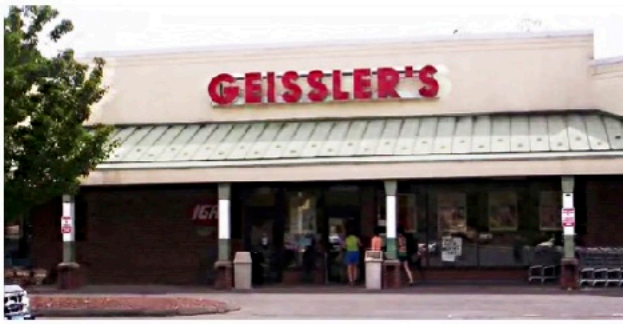
I'm so happy I grew up when all people respected each other and we had amazing role models. We had total respect for EVERYONE... This is how it was!! Growing up we had the best neighborhood. I often think of my childhood friends and wonder how they are (I am still in touch with a couple) such great memories!!

. When I was a child, our area code was 203. And most of my clothes came from Kmart, Caldors. Bradlees, Sears or hand me downs. Eating out at a restaurant was a huge deal that only happened for very special occasions. McDonald's was always a treat. Fast food was a ham 'n cheese or pb&j sandwich to take outside in the yard. Eating ice cream was a treat on a hot day. You took your school clothes off as soon as you got home and put on your play clothes. We had to do our homework before being allowed outside to play. We ate dinner at the table. We went to school everyday, and rode a bus with 3 to a seat. There was no taking or picking you up in the car. You walked! Our phone hung on the wall in the kitchen and had a cord. There was no private conversation or cell phones! Most TVs didn't have remotes, we had to actually get up to change the channel. We played "Mother May I?", Hopscotch, Cowboys and Indians, Cops and Robbers, 1,2,3 Not It, Red Light Green Light, Red Rover, Hide & Seek, Truth or Dare, Tag, Baseball, 4-square, Kick Ball, Dodge Ball, and we rode bikes. Girls could spend hours playing Barbies or house. Boys played football in the yard, or played with their action figures. We played baseball or softball at the local park every summer and swam in a pond. No one had their own pool! Staying in the house was a punishment, and the only thing we knew about "bored" was -- "You better find something to do before I find it for you!" We ate what mom made for dinner or we ate nothing at all. There was no bottled water; we drank from the tap, or the water hose (warm). We watched cartoons on Saturday mornings, and rode our bikes for hours and ran around in the woods. We weren't AFRAID OF ANYTHING. If someone had a fight, that's what it was, and we were friends again a week later, if not SOONER. We played til dark. Sunset was our curfew. School was mandatory and teachers were people who you could TRUST and respect. We watched our MOUTHS around our elders because ALL of our Aunts, Uncles, Grandpas and Grandmas AND our Parents' best friends were also our PARENTS. (They COULD & WOULD WHOOP Y'ALL!,) and you didn't want them telling your PARENTS if you misbehaved. These were the good ole days. Kids today will never know how it feels to be a real kid. I loved my childhood...!!! Kids these days will never understand how we grew up!!! Good Times!

REMEMBERING WINDSOR LOCKS' SUPERMARKETS

Italian Cooperative Society(ICS)supermarket
Corner of Spring & Main Sts. 1920-1950

First National Store, Main St, 1920-1954



Finast supermarket, Route 75

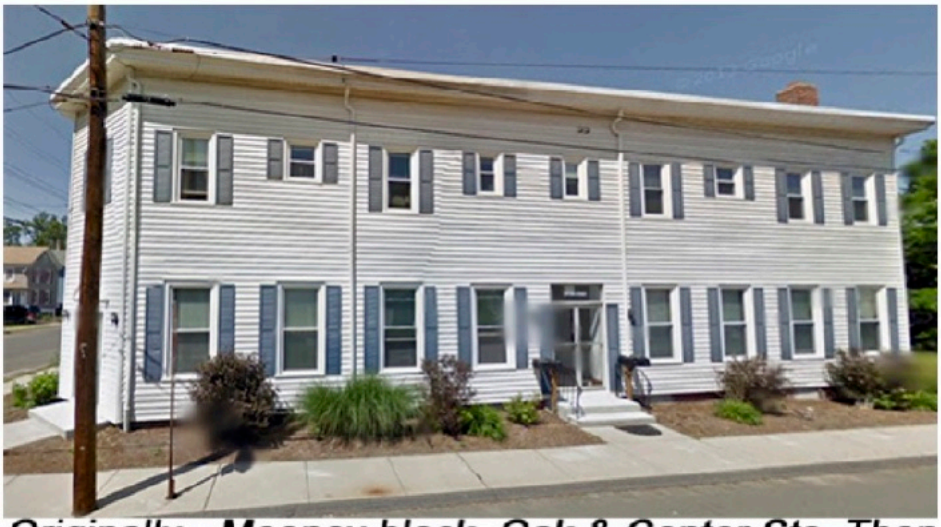
Windsor Locks had supermarkets from the 1920s to the 1970s

Wedding at St. Mary's Church

Tony Basile's Shoe Repair shop.
Photo taken from car of newly married couple.

It is possible that Windsor Locks had more wedding photos taken with a shoe repair shop in the background than any other town. Tony Basili's shoe repair shop was right across the street.

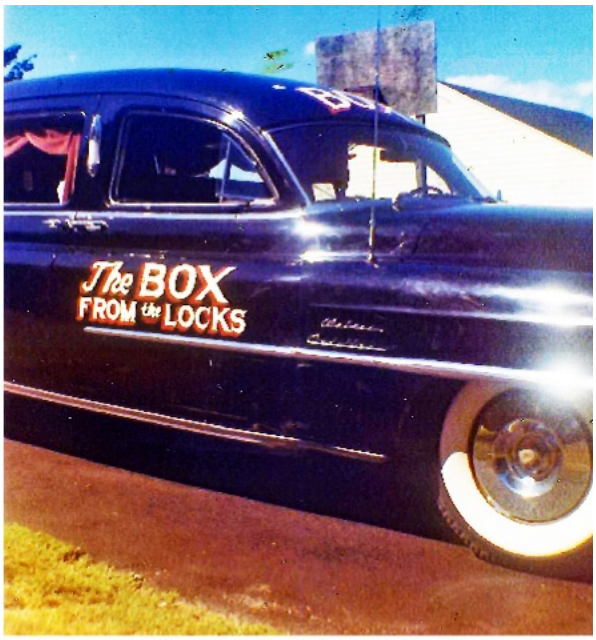
Mooney Block (1899) to Funeral Home to Apartment House



Originally - Mooney block, Oak & Center Sts. Then Johnson Funeral Home. Later Kania Funeral Home Finally, it became an apartment house.

J.E.Mooney's Block, Oak & Center Streets

John E. Mooney started a tin shop on Grove St. in about 1893, and added furniture sales and a mortuary. He moved his businesses to a new building that he built on the corner of Oak and Center Streets in 1899. He was the only merchant to move away from Main Street. His business thrived until his death in 1935. The building soon became Johnson's Funeral home., and then the Kania Funeral Home, and finally became an apartment house.



Richie Quagliaroli
&
The Box from the Locks.

~ 1960s

SANDY BEACH -
1960s WDRC SUPER DISC JOCKEY

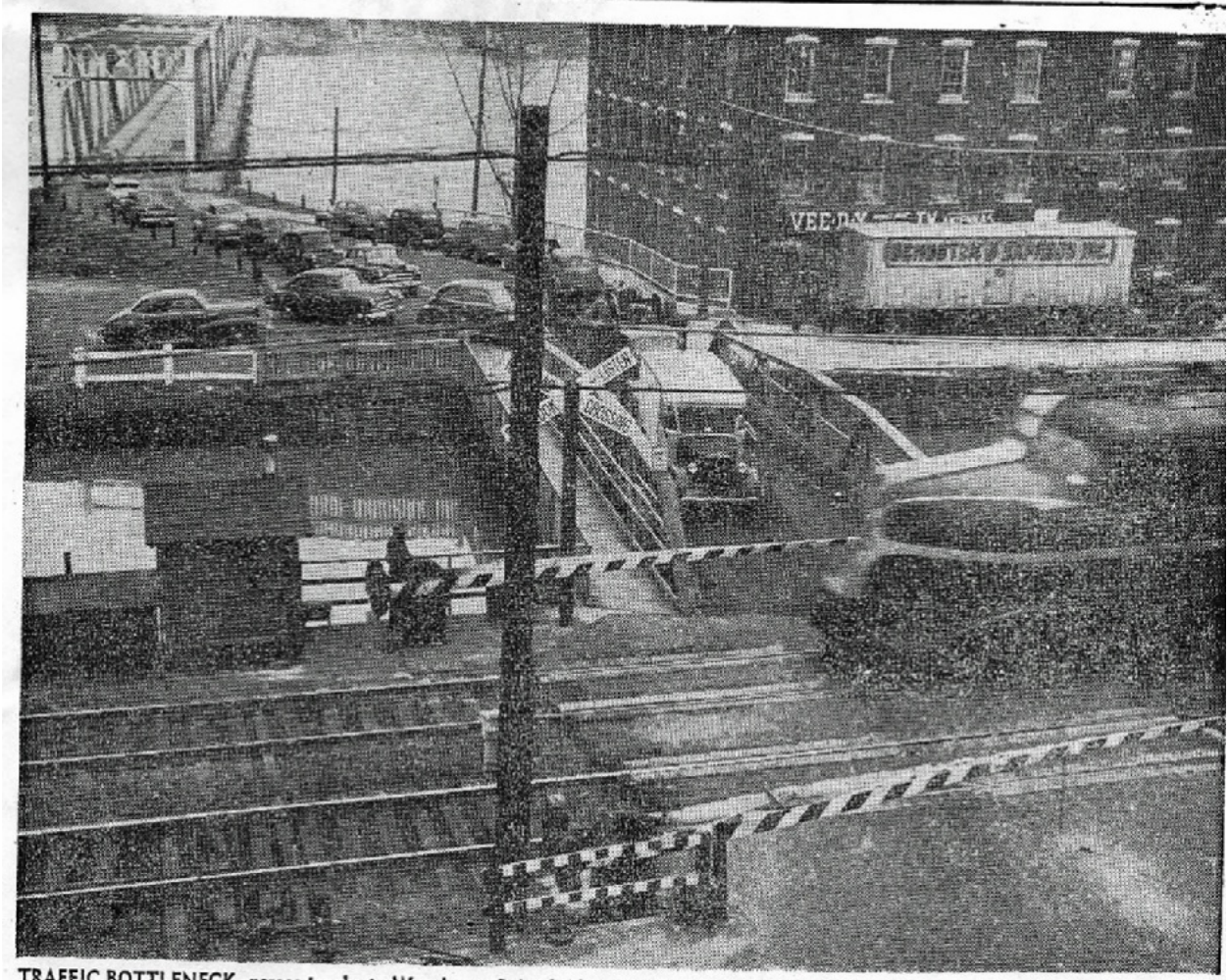
Windsor Locks folks of the 1960s remember SANDY BEACH!!!! He was one of WDRC's most popular personalities between January 1965 and June 1968. He originally hosted 1-4 p.m., sandwiched between Jim Nettleton and Long John Wade. In 1966 he relocated to noon-3 p.m. between Joel Cash and Dick Robinson. After Don Wade's departure in October 1967, Sandy inherited Big D's morning show from 5-9 a.m.These were **WDRC's** glory days.

You can't talk about Sandy's Hartford tenure without recalling his infamous laugh. One day he was reading the name of a contest winner and just couldn't pronounce it correctly. As an engineer astutely rolled tape, Sandy started laughing and couldn't stop. The clip has been played on the air many, many times over the years.

In 1967 and 1968 Hartford Courant readers frequently saw an image of Sandy and the late Bill Savitt, owner of a prominent downtown jewelry store. Bill knew the value of advertising and used the popularity of Sandy's show to promote a variety of products.

Traffic Bottleneck at the Bridge - 1951

THE HARTFORD TIMES, SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1951



TRAFFIC BOTTLENECK, across tracks to Warehouse Point bridge over Connecticut River, will call for correction. Picture shows vehicles stopped at one-way bridge over canal as train speeds by.—*(Times picture story by Hank Murphy.*

Old Yellow Tavern: A Lesson in Longevity

THE OLD YELLOW TAVERN, WINDSOR LOCKS.

The longest-lasting building in the history of Windsor Locks is a lesson In how to have a long and productive life. The "Old Yellow Tavern" was already a landmark in Windsor Locks when the town was incorporated in 1854. George Washington stayed there once in late 1789. The Old Yellow Tavern was built in the late 1700s, and it existed until the building of the I-91 highway caused it to be torn down in 1956. That is a lifespan of about a century and a half. Why did it last so long? The answer is that as the area underwent big changes, the usage of the building changed to suit the new environment.

Initially, in the early 1800s , it was an Inn for fallsmen to get a meal and room for the night. "Fallsmen" were the men who operated specially designed boats which could get over the Enfield rapids. Without the fallsmen, the only way you could transport goods past Enfield was by horse. Back then, the Tavern was a three-story building (see above photo on the left).

When the canal was built in 1829, there was no more need for the fallsmen, so the Old Yellow Tavern needed a new reason to exist. When the railroad came through in 1844, it did all of the transportation of goods and people up and down the Connecticut River. At that time, a stagecoach line was developed which went between New York and Boston. The Old Yellow Tavern was the midpoint of that trip, so it became a "Stagecoach Inn" for the New York - Boston Stagecoach Line. Its owners found a new life for the building.

When the stagecoach line went away, the Old Yellow Tavern became an Apartment House / Rooming House with a restaurant (1860?- about 1923), which served the growing number of workers at the mills along the canal.

In 1929, it became a single-family house, and it remained so until it was demolished in 1956, during the building of the I-91 highway. The family removed the third floor of the building. (See upper right photo.)

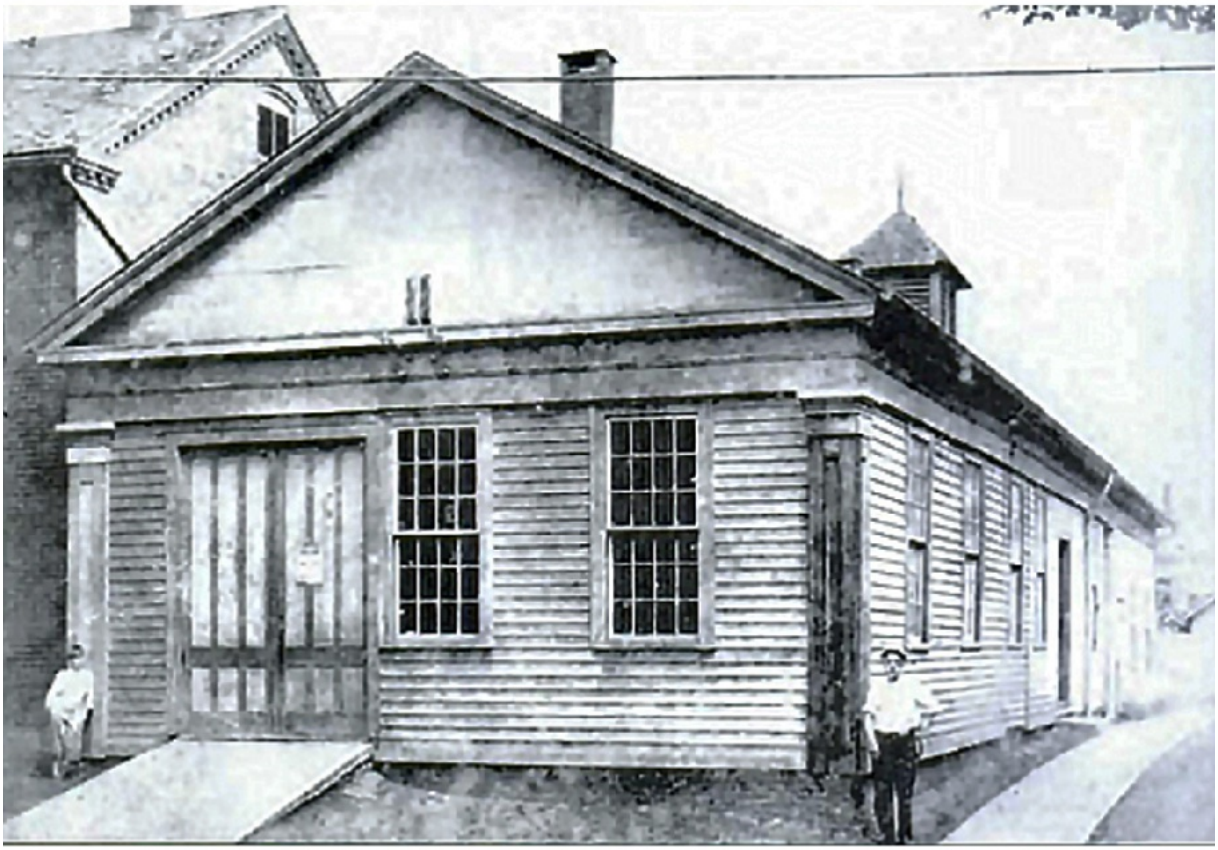
All of these changes allowed the Old Yellow Tavern to exist as a useful place from the early 1800s until 1956. It successfully adapted to a number of major changes in its world. It only went away when it met up with a change in its world which could not be coped with. This is an important history lesson for all.

St. Oronzo celebration, St. Mary's Church, Windsor Locks, Conn.
Vito Colapietro, President of St. Oronzo Society standing in front of statue

Festival of St. Oronzo in Turi, Italy

St. Oronzo celebration in Lecce, Italy

Once a Historic Building On Oak Street



Windsor Locks Town Hall, Elementary School, Jail, Courthouse, Dance Hall, Meeting Hall for Grand Army of the Republic. Built in 1838. Demolished in 1917. Replaced by Police and Fire Department.

Ella Grasso: Daughter of Immigrants Becomes Governor

Ella Grasso

Ella Grasso is one of Windsor Locks' best-known and most admired citizens. She was born in Windsor Locks to Italian immigrant parents, James and Maria Oliva Tambussi, in 1919. Her father owned and operated the Windsor Locks Bakery, and her mother was a mill worker.

Ella attended St. Mary's School in Windsor Locks, and then went to the Chaffee Institute in Windsor. After high school graduation in 1936, she entered Mount Holyoke College. She graduated *Magna Cum Laude* with a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in economics and sociology, with minors in history and political science. She earned a Phi Beta Kappa key her junior year. Yet schoolwork was not enough to keep Ella busy. During her junior and senior years at Mount Holyoke, she held positions as a part-time assistant and teacher for the Department of Economics and Sociology. In 1942, Ella received a Masters of Arts degree in economics and sociology from Mount Holyoke.

In 1943, Ella's longtime life of public service began with a position at the Connecticut State Department of Labor. A year later, she became the Assistant Connecticut State Director of Research for the War Manpower Commission, where she served until 1946. In 1952, she was elected to the Connecticut House of Representatives, where she served until 1957. She became first woman to be elected "Floor Leader of the House" in 1955. In 1958 she was elected Secretary of the state of Connecticut, and she was re-elected in 1962 and 1966. In 1970 she was elected as a Democratic Representative to the 92nd Congress of the United States. She won re-election in 1972.

She opted to run for Governor of Connecticut. In January 1974, she announced her gubernatorial candidacy. Ella won. She became the first woman to be elected a US governor without succeeding a husband. Grasso's four–year term commenced in January 1975. In 28 years as a public figure, Ella never lost an election.

Sadly, on December 31, 1980, Governor Grasso resigned her office due to illness. She passed away several weeks later on February 5, 1981, at the age of 61, from ovarian cancer. Her accomplishments however, remained intact. She is remembered for bringing the state of Connecticut out of debt, and for creating an open government, which gave ordinary citizens easier access to public records.

President Ronald Reagan posthumously awarded her the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Ella Grasso was special in many ways. One could see, when she got into the very difficult area of politics, that she was not only bright and hardworking, but that she also had the ability to look at difficult situations, and figure ways to turn them into a "win".

Changes in Dexter's Set of Buildings

~1870. View from corner of Main & Elm Sts, looking NE. Shown: L to R: Dexter sawmill and second Grist Mill, which was built 1819. In its basement. Dexter began paper making experiments in 1833. The building on the right is the first Dexter Co paper mill which burned and was replaced in 1875.

~1872. Looking south. L to R: The first Dexter Co paper mill, which burned and was replaced in 1875. The Old Grist Mill which stood opposite the Congregational Church was demolished in 1925.

~1954. Shows the 1928 addition to the 1875 mill. Addition contained fine office space on 4th floor with finishing and shipping deptartments on the lower floors.

~1961. Shows the Old Power House, which was on the NW corner of Main & Elm Streets. It was demolished in 1962. An addition was made to the 1928 addition in rear of Dexter mill.

Jack Quagliaroli and Park Chevrolet

Jack Quagliaroli by his truck at Park Chevrolet

Park Chevrolet, 6 North Main St., Windsor Locks, Conn.
NAtl 3-3375 Nights, Sundays & Holidays NAtl 3-4814

Malcolm Moore: Built Army Airfield in Six Months

The US Army and the State of Connecticut decided to build an Army Airfield in Windsor Locks in Jan. 1941. In March, 1941, the US Congress appropriated $2.6M to construct the airfield. In July 1941, with construction nearing completion, military command and logistics personnel began to arrive.

That meant that the airfield had to be built between March and July of 1941. Construction began in March, 1941. Thirty Army engineers and 1800 laborers was put together to build the airfield. They were under the direction of **Malcolm Moore,** the Chief Engineer. Let's look at the job he was asked to lead.

Construction began on March 7, 1941. The work went on, night and day, seven days a week. Grading was done from March to May. Drainage was installed in April and June. The woods were cleared for the station hospital, and tracks for a spur line from Suffield were installed by the New Haven Railroad. A contract for runways was made. The runways were completed by July.

The plan called for 36 barracks, 9 day rooms, 8 mess halls, 5 officers quarters, a commissary, a 17-building hospital, and infirmary, one recreation building, a movie theater, 10 supply buildings, four ammo magazines, one motor pool, a utility shop, a parachute building, a radio station, six administration buildings, a guard house, six operations buildings, and a control tower.

The base was completed with 124,000 square yards of taxiways, 26 miles of roads, 19 miles of water mains capable of 600,000 gallons per day, sewer lines with a capacity to serve 25,000 people, and housing for up to 8000 enlisted people. Aircraft would be serviced from a 350,000 gallon aviation gas system.

Bradley Field: Initial Wooden Main Hangar & Control Tower

The work had to be done "so as not to be visible from the air". This was achieved by leaving surrounding farmlands as intact as possible, complete with their old barns and farmhouses. The runways and taxi aprons were painted with a simulated patchwork of crops and country lanes to match the surrounding landscape. In July 1941, the military began to arrive. On Aug. 18, 1941, three squadrons of the 57th Pursuit Group arrived. **On August 18, 1941, just five months after construction began, the Windsor Locks Army Air Base was officially declared operational.** This transition from tobacco field to air base was a testimony to the team who built it. Malcolm Moore did a phenomenal job of managing that process and making it a full success. **That may have been the toughest job in the history of Windsor Locks.**

Pease Block	Burnap Block	Charter Oak Hotel	Moran Block	*about 1880*
Sid's Modern Drug	A&P	*Later became* Coly's Hotel	Goldfarb Block	

Main Street *about 1965*

Main Street *about 1997*

EVOLUTION OF MAIN ST.,

~ 1880 - Era of Immigrants working at mills and starting businesses

~ 1965 - End of Era of Main Street Business Center

~ 1997 - WL as a Residential Community
- Increase in residents, not businesses

James D. Outerson: Public Servant and Businessman

James D. Outerson was born in 1872. After graduating from Windsor Locks public schools, he took a business course in a Hartford school. After graduation, he briefly took a job in a Hartford department store, and then in a commercial grocery business in Hartford.

Brick building on left is the Outerson Block. Notice the "Town Clerk" and "Tax Collector" signs on the windows. It is on the North corner of Church and Main Streets, facing Main St.

Mr. Outerson was just 23 years old when he moved back to Windsor Locks. His career took off. **In 1895, he was elected to THREE Windsor Locks town government positions: town clerk, town treasurer and town registrar!!!! He held all three of those jobs until he died forty years later in 1936. During those 40 years, he was endorsed by both the Democrat and Republican parties!** That makes him unique.

In 1895, he bought a shoe store which was located on Main Street. Later, he moved his father's building on the corner of Church and Main Streets. The move enabled him to have a much larger store. By then, he had added the sale of men's and women's clothing to his shoe business. In the photo of the Outerson Block (on the previous page), you and see the sign for his government office on the windows.

We already know about Mr. Outerson's three jobs with the town government, and his ownership of a men's and women's clothing store. That was only part of his career. He was also:

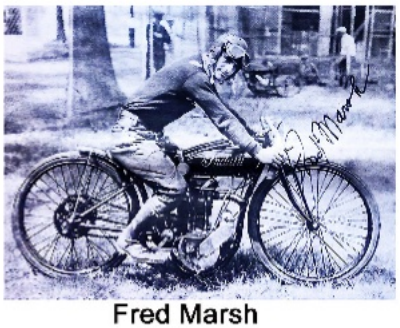
- secretary of the Building and Loan Association,
- owner of a local agency for accepting payment of gas, electric and water bills,
- owner of an insurance and bonding agency,
- member of the Chamber of Commerce.
- member of the Riverside Council of the Knights of Columbus,
- member of the Hartford Lodge of Elks, and
- an accomplished pianist and director of the Outerson Orchestra.

(information from the *Windsor Locks Journal* of Sept 18, 1936)

His death in 1936 took was a shock to the citizens of the town. The life and career of James D. Outerson can only be described as incredible.

Fred Marsh: Motorcycle Master

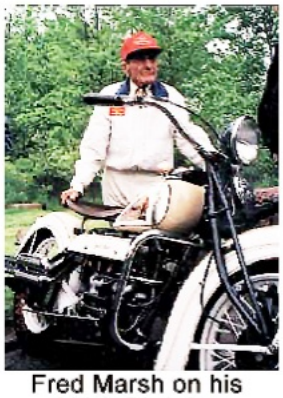
Fred Marsh



Fred Marsh

Windsor Locks Journal 09-08-1968

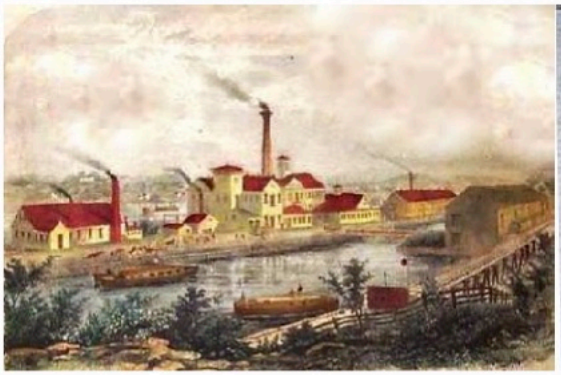
Fred Marsh on 100th birthday

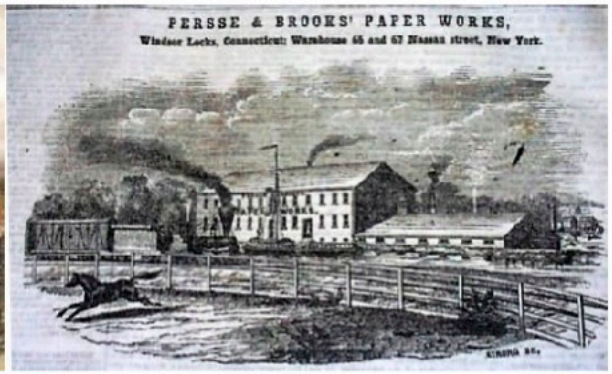


Fred Marsh on his 100th Birthday

In the 1940s-60s, if you drove into Warehouse Point from the bridge, you passed Fred Marsh's motorcycle store. It had an Indian Motorcycle in the window. He was a PASSIONATE cyclist from boyhood thru old age. As a young racer, he was nicknamed "Demon". He owned motorcycle dealerships for 77 years, from 1926 until he died in 2003. He raced in seven different decades. He rode in hill-climbing races until he was 89. There was a large party at his dealership on his 100th birthday in 2000, and he got a birthday present from President Clinton. He was inducted into the Motorcyclist Hall of Fame in 2002, when he was 102. He never married. He lived in his motorcycle shop.

Irish Immigrant Built US's Biggest Paper Mill in Windsor Locks





More than 400 Irish immigrants were the labor force which dug the Windsor Locks Canal between 1827 and 1829. They lived in labor camps and faced dangers and hardships, with some dying during the two-year construction and being buried in unmarked graves. They signed contracts which didn't allow them to leave their job until their contract was over. They did this because conditions in Ireland were so bad. When Windsor Locksers think of "Irish immigrants", those are the people they think of. However, there was another Irish immigrant who was not in that group, who had a big effect on Windsor Locks in 1844. Dudley Persse was an Irish immigrant, who was sent to America by his father in 1821, at the age of 18. His family tree shows people who achieved prominence in Ireland and in the United States. When he got to America, he went to New York city, and became a capable, powerful, wealthy businessman in a short period of time.

In 1844, he teamed up with a New York lawyer named Horace Brooks, and they bought a paper mill next to the Windsor Locks canal that was owned by Samuel Williams. They invested a great deal of money which they borrowed from a New York bank. They improved the buildings and installed the best paper-making machinery that was available. They created the "Persse and Brooks Paper Works". It soon became what was considered to be the **biggest paper mill in the United States**. Unfortunately, in 1857, the bank that they borrowed the money from failed. Their Windsor Locks paper business ceased to exist. Interestingly, neither Persse nor Brooks moved to Windsor Locks during that time they owned the paper mill. Persse remained in New York and did very well. He was obviously a very, very capable businessman.

Joe Raccone - Outstanding Windsor Locks Citizen

Joe Raccone's family: L-R, Joseph (son) Anna (wife), Robert, Roberta (daughter), and Joseph Raccone 1953

Joe Raccone was a well-known and well-liked fixture of Windsor Locks throughout his life. He grew up with a love of sports. He played baseball, softball and was an avid bowler. He was a big fan of the New York Yankee. Early in his career, he worked at the Medlicott Co. and the Fuller Russell Tobacco Co. **He was the Windsor Locks Postmaster from 1956 to 1975.** He was treasurer of a St. Mary's Federal Credit Union from 1956 to 1975, and a member of its Board of Directors for 54 years. He was Treasurer of the Knights of Columbus for over 50 years.

In his earlier years, Joe Raccone was the Treasurer of an organization known as "The Italian Cooperative Society", (the ICS). It had two functions. It owned and ran an Italian grocery store, the "Italian Cooperative Market" on Main Street. Its second function was a carry-over of a tradition that was widespread in Italy. Most towns in Italy had an organization to which a person could go to for advice and help in starting a new business. Such clubs were formed in American towns when the Italian immigrants arrived. The ICS was such an organization. Windsor Locks had a large number of Italian immigrants who started businesses. Joe Raccone, as the Treasurer of the ICS, was in a unique position to help them learn.

In 1949, the ICS decided to bring its organization to a close. It was Joe Raccone who brought that question to a vote. That gives you an idea of how important he was in the organization. Interestingly, the ICS sold its business location to the Marconi Brothers, who opened their Luncheonette in the same space. It is also interesting to know that the Marconi brothers had run the "Italian Cooperative Market" for the ICS.

Joe Raccone had a long, creative and successful career in Windsor Locks. Joe was a family man. In conclusion, Joe Raccone was an outstanding citizen of Windsor Locks - a person to be admired and emulated.

12 Presidents & 2 Vice Presidents Visited Windsor Locks

President George Washington - Oct 21, 1789, he wrote in his diary: "Between Windsor and Suffield, you pass through a level, barren, uncultivated plain for several miles". He was traveling from Springfield to Suffield and then to Windsor, to see his friend Oliver Ellsworth, a Supreme Court Justice

Vice-President-Elect Hannibal Hamblin - On February 19, 1861 Vice President-Elect(to President-Elect Abraham Lincoln), Hannibal Hamblin left Boston by train, and expected to arrive in NYC on the 4:30 PM train. For some unexplained reason, he got off the train at Windsor Locks. The next day, he took Boston Express train to NYC.

President Harry Truman - During the Fall of 1948, he passed through Windsor Locks on his famous whistle-stop ride, which saved his Presidential campaign. From the back of the train, he waved at the crowd at the train station.

President Dwight Eisenhower - On May 23, 1950: Retired General Dwight Eisenhower arrived at Bradley Field to break ground for the new Murphy Terminal. On October 20, 1954 he landed at Bradley Field again.

President Lyndon Johnson - On May 15, 1967, He was greeted by the New England governors, and gave a speech at the Air Guard building on Rt. 75.

President Richard Nixon - He visited Windsor Locks in 1970.

President James Carter - On October 28, 1978, he was greeted by Governor Ella T Grasso as he stepped off Air Force One at Bradley Field. He was supportinng Gov. Grasso campaign for a 2nd term as Governor.

President Ronald Reagan visited on October 18, 1984, and in August 1981.

Vice President George H.W. Bush visited on October 35, 1992.

President George H. W. Bush visited on Oct. 25, 1992, and other times.

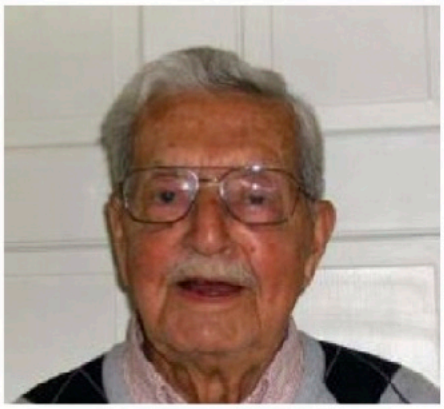
President William Clinton visited on June 20, 1997 and other times..

President George W. Bush visited here on August 25, 2005 other times

President Barrack Obama visited here on April 9, 2013, and other times.

President Joe Biden visited Windsor Locks on October 15, 2021

Jack Redmond: Windsor Locks Journal Columnist



Jack Redmond

Jack Redmond was a well-known and well-liked Windsor Locks citizen. He moved to Windsor Locks in 1964, at the age of 42. In 1975, he started writing a weekly column in the Windsor Locks Journal, which became very popular. Every week, he wrote an article about a local person who was doing something interesting or important in town. The column, which was called "Cabbages and Kings", ran weekly from 1975 to 1999.

In his first column, on April 24,1975 Jack laid out his vision for his series of columns beautifully, simply and with elegance. He said: "...people want to hear and read about people who make up the news in Windsor Locks and Connecticut, people who have made their marks in our town by way of the political, civic, fraternal and coaching circles. Mr reasons are very simple.... people make the best stories."

Jack's weekly column, "Cabbages and Kings" ran for 24 years. It covered approximately 1,200 columns, and thus about 1,200 individuals. It is now organized into 28 volumes in the Windsor Locks Public Library. It is available in hard-copy at the Windsor Locks Public Library, and it is available on-line via the Windsor Locks Public Library website.

Jack Redmond's weekly series of columns on local individuals provides a unique history of the town from 1975 to 1999. It is a personal view of Windsor Locks' happenings as seen through the eyes of the citizens being interviewed.

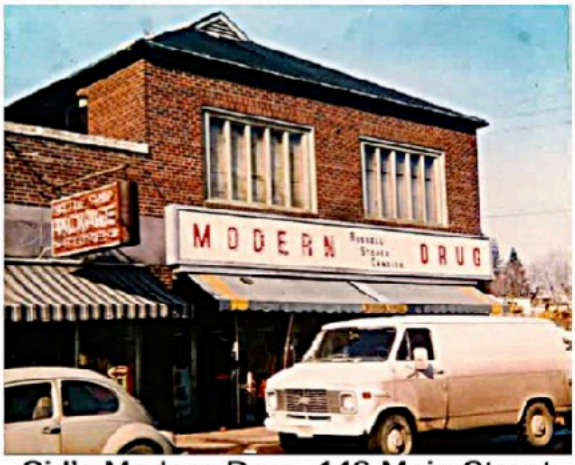
In his last column, Jack said why he was ending his long series of columns. He said: **"It's not my age. I have not lost the ability to write or to type, or meet people face to face for an interview. Frankly, it is just too difficult to find new people to interview for their stories. At times, I had 10 or more intended interviewees, but the list is disappearing."**

Jack left it to the people of Windsor Locks to figure out why he was having a hard time finding more people that were worth interviewing. That was a brutally frank statement. It would behoove anyone interested in the future of the town to take his finding seriously. He said he was having a difficult time finding people worth interviewing. Jack left the town with a treasure trove of information that historians can examine and interpret, and he left the town with an important finding. He passed away there on September 1, 2014.

Sid Portnoy: Owner of the "Modern Drug" Store

Sid Portnoy opened his Modern Drug store in 1952. The store was at 142 Main Street, on the corner of Oak and Main Streets. Sid Portnoy ran ads almost weekly in the Windsor Locks Journal throughout the life of his store.

The early pharmacies in Windsor Locks were owned and operated by local pharmacists. Sid Portnoy started up WIndsor Locks' first pharmacy that was part of a national chain. It was known as "Sid's Modern Drug", but it was part of the Walgreen's chain.



Sid's Modern Drug, 142 Main Street

Sid was a unique character. He was very friendly and very personal. Everyone knew him as "Sid", but many never knew his last name. He didn't just sell drug store products. He had all sorts of things that you might use as gifts or personal items. If you asked for something that he didn't have, he'd say: "I don't have it now, but I'll have it by next Tuesday." He would get you what you wanted. If you needed to have your prescription filled, but you didn't have your prescription with you, he'd just fill it anyway, if he knew you. His store had all sorts of interesting things. He had a round tub with a small board in the middle, which spun when you pressed a button. You attached a piece of paper to the board in the middle of the tub. Then you squirted paint at the piece of paper as it spun. It was "new". It was fun. It was always a pleasure to go into Sid's Modern Drug. He knew his customers.

He opened his "Modern Drug Store" at on the Southwest corner of Oak and Main Streets in 1952. Like Wuzzy's, the Donut Kettle and Bianchi's Restaurant, Sid's Modern Drug Store was a local "institution". All went well until a fire in 1955.

After the fire, Sid's moved his Modern Drug Store into a building near the north end of Main Street, across from Windsor Locks Commons shopping center. Sid's Modern Drug store closed in 1974. Sid was unique. His Modern Drug Store was unique. Sid's style was unique. He added character, and "local color" to Windsor Locks' Main Street, when the town had a Main Street that was populated by locally-owned small businesses.

Outerson Block, Corner of Church & Main Sts.
~1975, just before the stores were demolished
in the Main St. Redevelopment Project.

Buick Dealership and WL School Bus Garage On Grove Street

Announcing

1922 BUICK

Emblem of Satisfaction

Quality has been foremost when considering the construction of the 1922 Buick, an established standard of Buick construction that has given to the Buick Valve-in-Head Motor Cars a reputation for superiority.

Announced by the Buick Motor Co.

New Prices on 1922 Models

DELIVERY STARTING JUNE 1st

Buick Model 1923—47

Model	Old Price, Delivery f. o. b. Windsor Locks	New Price '22 Delivery f. o. b. Windsor Locks	Difference
22-44	$2000.00	$1635	$365
22-45	2000.00	1665	335
22-46	2825.00	2295	530
22-47	3170.00	2620	550
22-48	3270.00	2505	765
22-49	2285.00	1885	400
22-50	3690.00	2830	760

PROMPT DELIVERIES AT

STONE'S BUICK GARAGE,

LOUIS L. STONE, Proprietor.

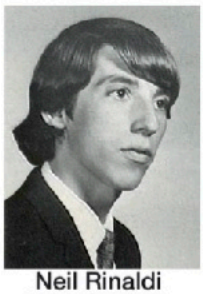
Grove Street, WINDSOR LOCKS, CONN.

WHEN BETTER AUTOMOBILES ARE BUILT, BUICK WILL BUILD THEM

Billy Stone

From 1920-1926, Louis Stone ran an auto repair shop on Grove Street. In 1926, he opened a Buick Dealership which ran ads in the Windsor Locks Journal from 1926 to 1932. His family lived in the house on the southwest corner of Center and Grove Streets. His dealership (see photo above). was behind his house, on Grove Street. His son, Billy Stone, took charge of the Windsor Locks school bus system in the 1950s. He used the same building for the school buses. He continued this into the 1960s. Later, the building was torn down. Billy pitched for the Windsor Locks High School baseball team. He played football & hockey. Later he played baseball in local industrial leagues. He played football in a semi-professional league. He coached hockey in Suffield Academy for ten years. Billy Stone was inducted into the Windsor Locks Sports Hall of Fame in 2011.

Neil Rinaldi: Outstanding Music Teacher



Neil Rinaldi
WLHS 1971

Windsor Locks High School had two outstanding music teachers in the 1984 -1995 era, who took the level of student performance to new heights. Their students won many prestigious music contests. Many of their students became professional musicians. Their names are Neil Rinaldi and John Gionfriddo. They arrived at WLHS in the mid 1980s and left about a decade later. This is the story of Neil RInaldi.

Neil Rinaldi joined his first band as a freshman at WLHS in 1968.. He met Mr. James Gurley, who was the father of one Neil's friends, Ladd Gurley. Mr. Gurley gave Neil advice on how to play drums in a band. Helping a young musician learn how to play in a band increases not only their skill but also their confidence. When Neil was a junior at WLHS, Mr. Gurley asked him to join his country/western band, which was known as "Jim Gurley and the Oklahoma Jamboree". Neil went to the Berklee College of Music in the fall of 1971. He was lucky to have Alan Dawson, who was the drummer for the Dave Brubeck Quartet, as his private lesson instructor at Berklee.

Neil Rinaldi & John Gionfriddo 1984

Neil became the WLHS Band Director in about 1978 . It was there that Tom, Mark and Stephen Savage were members of his high school band, and also of the WLHS Jazz Band. Tom graduated during Neil's first year teaching at WLHS. One year later, Michael Savage was in the high school band. Tommy started the Savage Brother Band at that time. Today (2024) it is one of the most popular and longest lasting bands in Windsor Locks history.

Neil taught a number of WLHS students who went on to become professional musicians, including

- Dan Castonguay, who now goes by the name of Dan Tracy,
- Tom O'Leary, who played the lead role in "Phantom of the Opera".
- Deanna Johns and Guy Drapeau, who formed Accidental Groove.
- Tom Culcasi, who became a singer, actor, musical director and producer in Texas and then in Florida.

Neil had two things that made him a great teacher. He had the "chops" of a professional musician, and he understood that to bring high school musicians to their full potential, he had to have those students meet and compete with the best high school musicians in New England. He got his students to set high standards for themselves, and to work hard to achieve them. He had the students compete in the best high school band competitions in the New England. That resulted in three first-place finishes at the Berklee College of Music Jazz Festival, and the Connecticut Marching Band state championship.

Pine Meadow Restaurant

Pine Meadow Restaurant, South Main Street, 1950s

Pine Meadow Restaurant, Flood of 1955

The Pine Meadow Restaurant was a full-service restaurant and ballroom from 1948 to 1956. It was owned and operated by the Stanley Pikul family. It hosted many big parties and weddings, including those of: Grace Rossi and Dominick Ruggiero, Patricia White and Joseph Marinone, and Marion Marnicki and Lawrence R. Oliva. The last party at the restaurant was the wedding reception for Beverly Bridge and Robert Kulas in 1956. The Pine Meadow Restaurant was on the property that was the home of the first settler in Windsor Locks, Henry Denslow.

The Crown Tavern

Crown Tavern
Main and Grove Sts
prior to Sept.3,1937

For Sale!

Crown Tavern, in Windsor Locks. Finest equipment, good business. For price and terms apply to George R. Dingwell, Windsor Locks.

FOR SALE

Lot on corner of Main and Grove streets, Windsor Locks, formerly known as the Shea property. Will be sold for taxes plus costs.

For further particulars apply at Tax Collector's Office, 76 Main St., Windsor Locks.

Windsor Locks Journal
September 3, 1937

Crown Tavern sign

Long before Shonty's Bar and Grill was on the corner of Grove and Main Sts, that space was **The Crown Tavern**. The Windsor Locks Journal had seven "For Sale" ads for the Crown Tavern in 1938. No information could be found on when it started. Nothing could be found about what was in that space between the time the Crown Tavern ended and Shonty's started. Margaret McIntyre Knowlton found a BIG "Crown Tavern" sign. See the photo above. It was stored by her father, who owned a bar at about the same time the Crown Tavern existed. It was just above where the Oak Street Market was. There is no proof that the big sign was from the Crown Tavern on Main Street, but that is the most likely source.

Fay H. Osborne: Dexter Corp's Master Product Developer

Fay H. Osborne

The Dexter Corporation was Windsor Locks' biggest and oldest company for a long time. It was the town's largest employer for almost a century.

For a long time, the Dexter company stayed in the hands of the Dexter family. In time, control moved to the Coffin family. Mr. Arthur D. Coffin met a young man there named Fay H. Osborne, who was headed off to M.I.T for college. Mr. Coffin suggested that Mr. Osborne specialize in the chemistry of paper at M.I.T. He did, and he went to work for the Dexter company in 1923, where he set up a laboratory. According to the Windsor Locks Journal of July 26, 1962, it was the first laboratory in a paper mill. It set the standard for paper mills which followed.

Mr. Osborne had seen some very thin Japanese paper which was made from Mulberry bark. He worked on a way of making that paper. He came up with a silky-textured paper that was made of Manila hemp fibers. The company found it could sell that paper for "meat casings". This type of paper was informally referred to by Windsor Locks residents as "baloney paper", which turned out to be a major source of income for the company.

By 1938, Mr. Osborne had developed a type of long-fiber paper for use as tea-bags. Prior to that, Dexter's tea-bag paper was one percent of the company's output. by 1962, it became 60 percent of the company's output. Mr. Osborn's tea-bags were outstanding. He further developed the quality and manufacturability of the tea-bag paper.

Mr. Osborne also developed a type of paper that could withstand a welder's torch. Such paper was manufactured and sold for making the heat-shielding for the nose-cones of military missiles.

Mr. Osborne rose up the ranks in company. It turns out that he was not only a highly successful researcher and product developer, he was an outstanding manager. When he retired in 1962, he was Executive Vice President of the Dexter Co. After 233 years, the Dexter Co. was dissolved. At that time, the company was still making the paper developed by Mr. Osborn, known as "Baloney Paper". Another successful type of paper developed by Fay Osborne was a blue paper called "surgical drape". It was used for disposable operating room scrubs.

Dexter D. Coffin said that no other employee of the company contributed more to the success of the company than Faye Osborne.

Every citizen of Windsor Locks should know about Faye Osborn. It would be good if some children of Windsor Locks would take Mr. Osborne as a person they want to model themselves after.

John E. Mooney: Amazing Multi-Talented Entrepreneur

John E. Mooney

J.E.Mooney's Block, Oak & Center Streets

Mr. John E. Mooney was major force in the development of the town of Windsor Locks in the years from 1850 to 1935. While still a boy, he went to work in the mills. He learned the tinning trade from Mr. C. E. Chaffee. While working at the Seymour Paper Company in 1887, he opened a tin shop on Grove St., and a few years later, he added the furniture business and the undertaking business.

He was elected as chairman of the Board of Selectmen. He was also a member of the Board of Education, and a charter member of the Riverside Council of the Knights of Columbus. He was a member of the Business Men's Association, which became the Chamber of Commerce, and a trustee of St. Mary's Church. **Mr. Mooney was a "Mover and a Shaker".**

He built a very successful business in both the furniture and the Undertaking businesses on Main St.. in 1898, Mr. Mooney moved his furniture and mortuary business to the new building that he built **on the northeast corner of Oak and Center Streets**, because he felt that there was far too much horse and buggy traffic on Main St. (See above photo). It had a room for his furniture business, a room for his tin work, a hall that would rented out for meetings, dances, socials, etc. and room for his mortuary business. The 1913 Aero Map said that Mr. Mooney sold stoves and ranges, plumbing and heating materials, and his mortuary business.

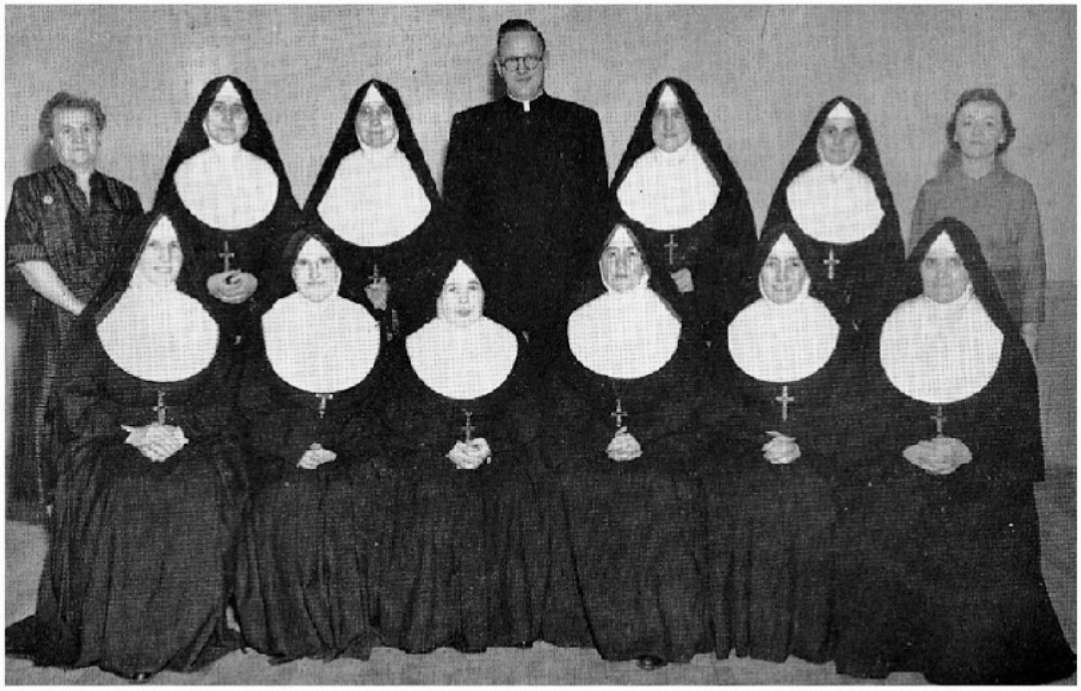
Mr. Mooney's business continued it until his death in 1935, when the building became the Johnson Funeral Home. In 1969, it became the Kania Funeral Home. Sometime after that, it became a two story apartment house.

Mr John E. Mooney was a self taught businessman who ran four different businesses simultaneously, and he did it well. He was an ardent community leader, as well as one of the most forward-thinking town "big-business"men. He was the only major business owner on Main St. to move his business away from Main St!!!! He moved it to the corner of Oak and Center Streets. That took intelligence, guts and creativity. IT WORKED VERY WELL.

The Palisado Farm Market Near Windsor Locks in 1941

This photo of the Palisado Farm market was taken by John Collier, who was sent to take photos of Windsor Locks and the surrounding area, by the Farm Security Administration in Washington, DC in 1941. The location was in Windsor, near Windsor Locks. The word "Palisado" is quite important, but the meaning of the word may not be well known to all modern Windsor Locksers. **The Palisado** was a fortified historic settlement, built by early English colonists in Windsor, CT in about 1637. The original 1637 Palisado site is where the Palisado Green and First Church sit today. The "Palisado Farm Market" was a functioning roadside agricultural stand in 1941, as the photo shows. It was known for selling a wide variety of fresh local produce, as the photo shows.

The Faculty of St. Mary's Elementary School ~1953



Standing: Mrs. F. Kearns, St. M. Rita, St. M. DeChantal, Rev. J.B. Shea, St. Agnes Loretta, Sr. Mary Bernadette, Mrs. M. Fleming. Seated: Sr. M. Vincentia, Sr. M Theodore, Sr. M. Josita, Sr. Francis Clare, Sr. M. Alicia, Sr. Ann Vincent.

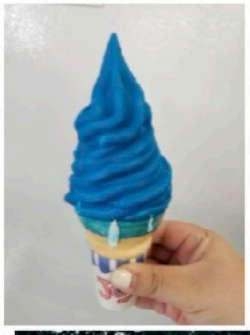
By the 1950s, class size increased. The above class had 47 students and a single unpaid teacher. This photo is from about 1957.

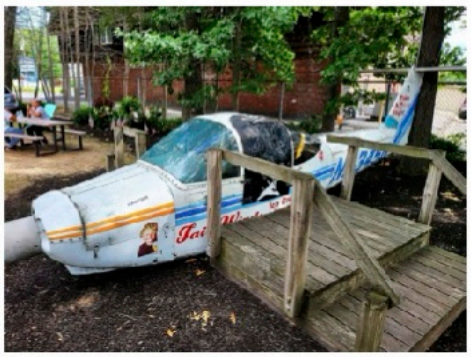
Tail Winds Ice Cream Shop History

The building at **69 Old County Rd**. has had a long history. Before 1966, it was the home of Mr. & Mrs. Charlie Wilson. For a few years in the 1960s, it was a seasonal ice cream stand known as **Sal-Lee's**. It was run by Sal Abbate of Ash Drive. His parents, Sal and Lee Abbate, backed him as he began the business. Mr. Wrabel worked at Sealtest Ice Cream, and provided the mix and a freezer. Sal ran the business for about two summers before shutting it down.

In about 1971, Joe Becker bought that building, which was in bad shape. He fixed it up with help of his friend, Mr. Miclon. He opened it up in about 1972, and operated it as **Becker's Ice Cream Shop** for a few years. The year that it shut down could not be found. For a brief time in the 80 or 90's, it was **Ma's ice Cream,** and was run by Sue Mazza of Cypress St.

In 2009, Ms. Andrea Wagner bought the building from the Becker family. It had been unused for years and was in bad shape. Ms. Wagner fixed it up, and opened a shop which sold both ice cream and farm produce for a number of years. The ice cream was selling well, but the farm produce sales struggled. She dropped the sale of farm produce, and turned the store into the **Tail Winds Ice Cream Shop**. The store was and is quite successful. Ms. Wagner's special approach is to continually canvas the industry for interesting new flavors and toppings, and then add the best ones into her menu.





Tail Winds Ice Cream Shop

"The Locks People" Band

Charlie Woodhouse

Dick Brunette

In about 1965, Windsor Locks resident, Charlie Woodhouse, put together a band. Charlie had a group of Cub Scouts which had a project to entertain residents of local convalescent homes in Windsor Locks and neighboring towns. Charlie was joined in this project by his friends (Jim Loughran, Steve Okun, and John Sullivan) and many of their children. The group named itself **The Locks People**. More players joined in, including: Dick Lowe, Connie Burstyn, Clare Howard, Jeff Ives, Pat and Mike Hargrove, and Norm Renouf. Charlie was one of the primary drivers of Windsor Locks' "Summer Music Series" which started in the 1990s. It included local bands such as the Savage Brothers band and FullKrew. That series is still going on in 2025.

Charlie was a capable and enthusiastic organizer of musical events, and the leader of **The Locks People** bands He passed away in 1995. At that time, Dick Brunette, an accomplished musician, who had been an active member of **The Locks People,** took over leadership of the group. His son, Dave Brunette, a professional musician, often played with **The Locks People**. He kept it going until he passed away in 2014. Their last gig was on Dec, 9, 2014. **The Locks People** was active from 1965 to 2014, for a total of about 49 years!!!! No photos of the group could be found. **Johnny Menko's Polka Band**, **The Locks People**, **Full Krew**, and **the Savage Brothers Band** are Windsor Locks' longest lasting bands.

BAND NAME	BEGAN	ENDED	TOTAL YEARS AS OF 2025
Johnny Menko's Polka Band	1936	2009	73
The Locks People	1965	2014	49
Savage Brothers Band	1884	still active in 2025	41
Full Krew	1985	still active in 2025	40

Dan Leach
Outstanding Citizen & Businessman

Dan Leach's Coal Yard, Main St. - Dec. 1965

Dean of Businessmen Honored By Chamber

Mr. E.T.LaJoie presents plaque to Daniel F. Leach, Apr. 9, 1959

The Windsor Locks Journal of 1880 to1974 occasionally wrote an editorial on an extraordinary citizen of Windsor Locks. Rarely did any one individual get more than one such editorial. DAN LEACH GOT 10 OF THEM!!!!

He started off working in the mills along the canal in1892. When Mr. Lock Barrett built the massive Barrett building Main Streets in 1896, he put Dan in charge of his Livery Stable. In 1914, when Lock Barrett died, Dan Leach and Lock's son, James, took over Lock's coal and trucking business. In 1916, James Barrett sold his share of the business to Dan, who became the sole owner of the coal & trucking business, which was located where the Windsor Locks Commons shopping center was later built. Dan started by enlarging the coal business and by modernizing it. He switched from horse and wagons to motorized trucks. He revolutionized things by adding the new product, "heating oil". to the coal business.

Then Dan added to his work by also getting into politics. He became the Windsor Locks town Registrar, By 1944, WWII was underway and getting oil and coal was extremely difficult. Dan was clever and aggressive in insuring that town citizens got the heating fuels that they needed.

Dan Leach retired in 1964. His coal and oil yard was an obvious landmark on the north end of Main Street for almost a half a century. In 1965, Dan Leach died at the age of 87. The Windsor Locks journal described him as a beloved citizen of the town. He rose from mill-worker to own and run a large and important company. He set an example for future generations.

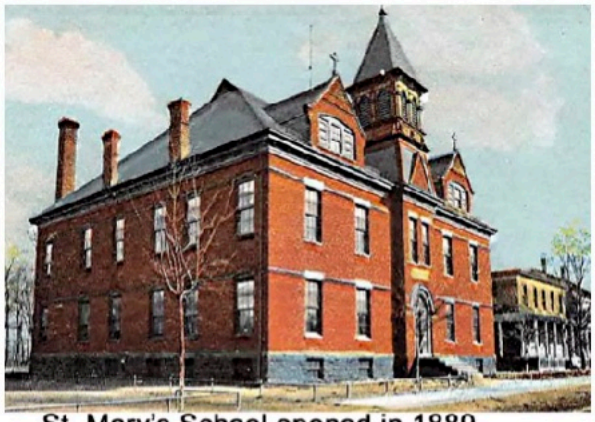
"Storm Larry" - The Great Snow Blizzard of 1978

The Great Snow Blizzard of 1978 hit New England on February. 5, 6 and 7, 1978. It heavily affected Windsor Locks, CT, which is home to Bradley International Airport. On February 5, the storm left 5.98 inches of snow. On February 6, the brunt of the blizzard hit, dumping 12.8 inches of new snow in a single day, with maximum wind speeds of 38 **mph**. On February 7, the storm tapered off with an additional 4 inches of snow and wind gusts reaching 56.2 km/h. The total snow depth was 20.98 inches. The extreme snowfall and fierce winds forced Bradley International Airport to shut down, stranding travelers and paralyzing road travel across north-central Connecticut.

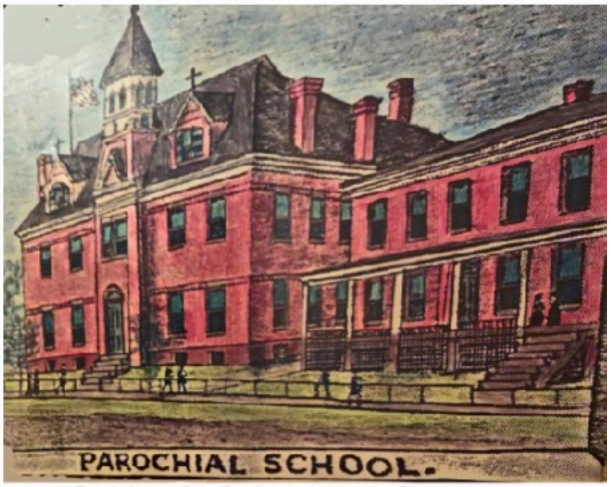
During that era, the federal government did not name winter storms. However, the Travelers Weather Service, which broadcasted on Connecticut radio and TV stations, had a local practice of naming major winter storm systems alphabetically. Because this was the 12th winter storm of the year, they named it "Larry". The name stuck!!!

Gov. Ella Grasso on TV, announcing plans for the blizzard.

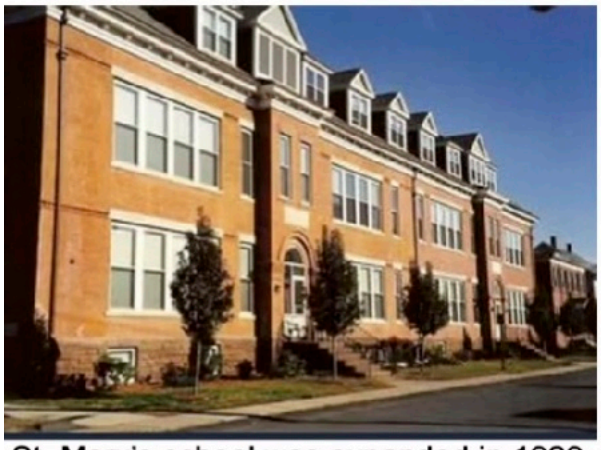
St. Mary's Elementary School and Convent



St. Mary's School opened in 1889.
The Convent, at right, opened in 1901.



St Mary's School and Convent



St. Mary's school was expanded in 1929,
and became an apartment house in 1972.

St.Mary's Convent with front porch removed

St. Mary's Church opened in 1853. The parish opened a school with 100 students in 1866 in available facilities. St. Mary's School was completed on Grove Street in 1889. The Sisters of St. Joseph, who taught at St. Mary's School lived in the house on the Northwest corner of Grove and Chestnut Streets. The Convent for the Sisters of St. Joseph was built next to the school in 1901. The Convent can be seen in all four photos above. The school was expanded in 1929. It was closed in 1972, and was turned into an apartment house. The Convent was also turned into an apartment house.

MARCONI BROTHERS - THE WHOLE STORY

John, Angelo & Louie Marconi

In 1937, John, Angelo and Louis Marconi bought the confectionary store of Leo and Peter Viola in the Rialto Building, and turned it into a luncheonette. In 1949, the Marconi Brothers bought the Converse Building, which was on the corner of Spring and Main Streets, from the Italian Cooperative Society (ICS). The corner store of that building was a grocery store, which was owned by the ICS but was being run by the Marconi Brothers. When they bought the building, the Marconi brothers turned the grocery store into the Marconi Brothers Luncheonette. The Marconi brothers owned two other businesses at that time. One was the luncheonette in the Rialto Theater building. The other was a "newsroom" which was near the corner of Oak and Main Streets. It is not known when they ended those two businesses. The Marconi Brothers Luncheonette turned into one of the most popular businesses on Main Street, until the Main Street Redevelopment Project bought the building from the Marconi Brothers, and demolished it in 1975. John, Angelo (Wuzzy) and Louis then opened a luncheonette in Suffield, but it was short-lived. The Marconi Brothers played a major role in creating the Golden Era of Windsor Locks. As an aside, Angelo and Louie Marconi were avid boxers. They often boxed in matches in the Central Hall boxing arena in the late 1920s.

Historic Flight from Bradley Field to Montgomery, Alabama - March 18,1965

Bradley Field, Windsor Locks, CT, March 18,1965. Flight to Montgomery, Alabama to participate in Martin Luther King's march in Selma. Ninety Connecticut residents boarded the flight.

The Dexter Corporation Headquarters Building
1963 - 2007

The Dexter Corporation International Headquarters

The Dexter Corporation International Headquarters building, shown in the above photo, was on the Northwest corner of the intersection of Elm and Main Streets. It was built in **1963**, just after the Dexter Power Plant, which was at that location, was demolished. The Dexter headquarters building was demolished in **2007**, and replaced by a Walgreen store.

The Dexter company was originally founded in **1767** by Seth Dexter II. Originally it was a saw mill and a grist mill. In **1867**, the name of the company was changed to "C.H.Dexter and Sons". In **1914**, it was formally incorporated as "The Dexter Corporation". By the late 20th century, the Dexter Corporation was recognized as the oldest company listed on the New York Stock Exchange. In **2000**, the business was dismantled, and its Windsor Locks facilities were sold to the Ahlstrom Paper Group.

No other entity has had as big and as long an effect on Windsor Locks as the Dexter company.

Fishing at Mill Pond at the end of Kettle Brook

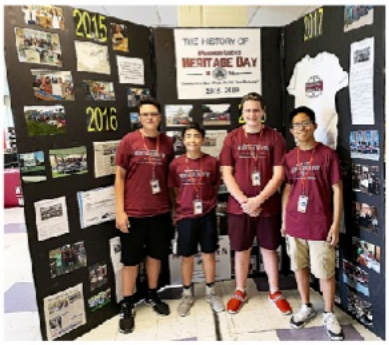
Fishing Derby at Mill Pond at the end of Kettle Brook near the Conn. river. Windsor Locks Centennial, 1954.

These two photos are of the Fishing Derby during the Windsor Locks Centennial in 1954. It was next to the Congregational church on Main Street. Windsor Locks kids went fishing there often up until the Mill Pond was drained in 1963-64, when the Dexter Corporate Office building was erected. It was a time of major change in the town of Windsor Locks.

Windsor Locks Middle School History Club - 2015-2019 and its Leader, Erick Knickerbocker

Windsor Locks Middle School History Club

Erick Knickerbocker



The Windsor Locks Middle School History Club, and its annual Heritage Day, were important parts of Windsor Locks life from 2015 to 2019. The Middle School and the field behind it filled with town citizens on Heritage Day. The event was planned by the members of the Middle School History Club. The History Club drew students who wanted to take on a challenge that was above and beyond what is normally done in schools. The driving force behind the History Club and Heritage Day was Mr. Erick Knickerbocker, an outstanding teacher at Windsor Locks Middle School since 2010, who knew how to motivate students. The Club ended in 2019 when Mr. Knickerbocker moved to another school.

How things have changed since we were born in the 1940s

"Many have passed away, and those who are still here are called "the elderly.""
We were born in the 40s-50s-60s.
We grew up in the 50's-60's-70's
We studied in the 60s-70s-80s.
We were together in the 70s-80s-90s.
We got married or not and discovered the world in the 70s-80s-90s.
Adventuring into the 80s - 90s
We're settling in to the 2000s.
We became wiser in 2010s.
And we're going strong into 2020 and beyond.
Turns out we went through EIGHT different decades...
TWO different centuries...
TWO different millennials...
We've gone from phone with operator for long distance calls, pay booths, video calls worldwide.
We've gone from slides to YouTube, vinyls to online music, handwritten letters to emails and Whats App.
Live games on the radio, black and white TV, color TV, then HD 3D TV.
We went to the video store and now watching Netflix.
We've known the first computers, punch cards, disks and now we have gigabytes and megabytes on our smartphones.
We wore shorts all through our childhood, then trousers, ep pants or mini-skirts,
Oxfords, Clarks, Palestinian scarves, jumpsuits, and blue jeans.
We avoided childhood paralysis, meningitis, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, swine flu and now COVID-19.
We've done roller skating, roller skating, tricycle, bicycle, moped, gasoline or diesel and now we drive hybrids or electric.
We played with the little ones, horses and checkers, ostrich and marbles, 1000 threshold and monopoly, now there's candy crush on our smartphones
And we read... much
And our schoolmates religion was not a subject...
We used to drink tap water and lemonade in glass bottles, and the vegetables on our plate were always fresh, today we get meals delivered.
Yes, we have been through a lotb but what a beautiful life we have had!
They might describe us as "ex-annuals"; people who were born in this 50s world, who had an analog childhood and digital adulthood.
We should add the Biological Revolution that we have witnessed. In 1960, biology was very descriptive. We have witnessed the event of Molecular Biology: the molecules of Life have been discovered: DNA, RNA etc. When you see everything that has come from it: gene therapy, gene fingerprints, and others the progress is considerable.
We kind of have "seen it all"!
Our generation has lived and witnessed more than any other in every dimension of life.
This is our generation that has literally adapted to "CHANGE".
Congratulations to all the members of a very special generation, which will be UNIQUE.

The Rialto Theater 1922-1975

The Rialto Theater, Main St. Windsor Locks, Conn

Rialto Theater shut down. About 1972

Talking To Contractor Fred Dinardi Of Urban Renewal Project

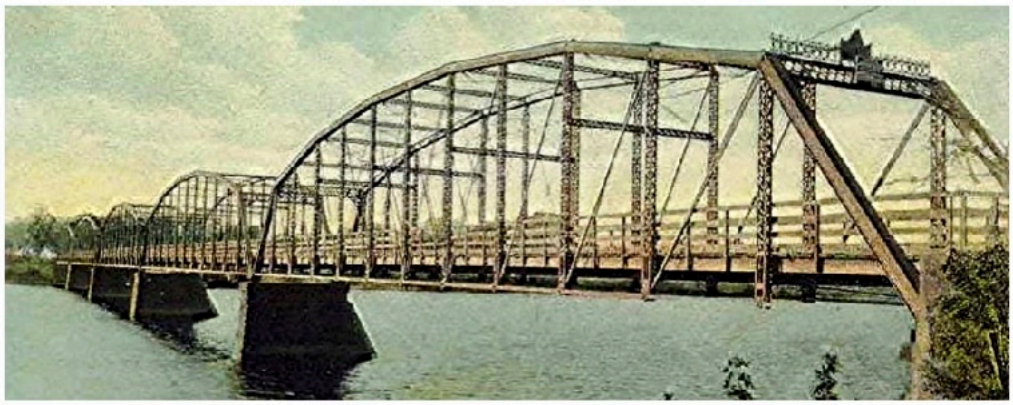
The last phots of the Rialto. Feb. 19, 1975

The Rialto Theater opened in October of 1922. It was owned by Dominick Alfano and Leo Viola. They built a magnificent movie theater which held 625 people. It was built to the latest safety standards. The prime reason for the Rialto was for movies. The stage was used for plays and musicals. Fraternal organizations used the stage for shows to raise money for charitable works. It was used as a place for politicians to give speeches, and for meetings of both the local Democrat and Republican parties. The stage was used for school graduations and plays. In the World War II years, there were stars such as Kate Smith and Joan Fontaine, who came to the Rialto and held "bond rallies". Dave Magliora managed the Rialto Theater for 25 years. He also owned the Brown Derby for eight years. He died on June 18, 1973. Viola and Alfano owned the Rialto from 1922 until Viola died in 1930. It was sold to Natale Tambussi in 1947, who owned it until 1960. After that, it was owned by Michael Halperin of Hartford. The Rialto Theater was demolished in 1975, in the Main Street Redevelopment Project.

"The Spirit of Windsor Locks, Conn."

B-17 bomber aircraft, known as a "Flying Fortress", which was dedicated to Windsor Locks, Conn. in recognition of the citizens of the town purchasing $177,484 in War Bonds and Stamps in 1943. During WWII, the Treasury Department of the United States set up a program to encourage citizens to buy War Bonds and Stamps. If a town raised a sufficient amount of funds, it would have a B-17 named in honor of the town. It was known has the "Buy A Bomber" campaign. The plane was used in the war, not given to the town.

Thompsonville-Suffield Bridge



The Thompsonville-Suffield Iron Bridge

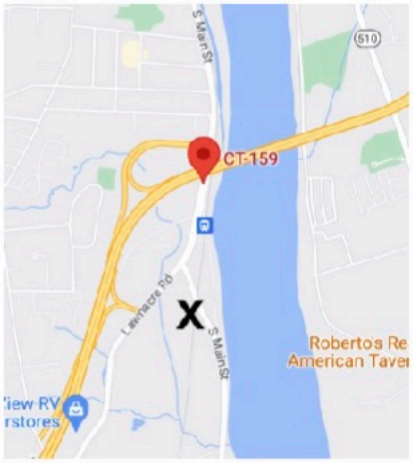
Thompsonville-Suffield Bridge - 1960s

The Thompsonville-Suffield Bridge was closed to vehicular traffic in December 1966, when the new Route I90 bridge opened to traffic between Enfield and Suffield. The center span of the old iron bridge over the Connecticut River was dynamited and dropped into the water in July 1971. The second and third spans were demolished in August 1971. The old Iron bridge over the Connecticut River (the center span) was dynamited and dropped into the water in July 1971. The second and third spans were demolished in August 1971. The stone piers were left standing in the event a pedestrian bridge will be built in the future. The Thompsonville Revitalization Committee master plan for the 1990s included a project using the stone abutments for a fishing pier and viewing area.

Jack O'Hara: Brought Professional Baseball to Windsor Locks

Jack O'Hara. a Springfield man, came up with a grand plan to get professional baseball teams to play a local team in Windsor Locks. He leased land from Pietro Paganelli, who had a farm in the south end of Windsor Locks, on which he would build a baseball field, called "The South End Stadium."

You can see the location of that stadium on the modern map on the right. It was about where Route 159 goes over the railroad tracks.



Location of Paganelli's baseball field in 1920s

Mr. O"Hara put together a Windsor Locks team of players from Holy Cross College, which had a very strong college baseball team. It was a time when professional baseball teams "barnstormed" towns and cities as a way of increasing the amount of money that the players could make. Mr. O'Hara had a plan for Sunday afternoon games. The first game to be played on the field was on be June 19, 1921. Nearly 3000 people attended. It was between the Windsor Locks team and a team from Ware, MA.

On June 26, 2021, Over 5,000 people showed up for the game against the American League Philadelphia team. Philadelphia won by 3 to 0. On July 21, the Windsor Locks team defeated the Pittsburgh National League team in front of 7,500 people. On July 29, the Windsor Locks team lost to St. Louis Cardinals by 2 to 0. On August 21, the Windsor Locks team beat the Pittsburgh Pirates.

John O[Hara enlarged and enhanced the stadium prior to the 1922 season. . A second full season of baseball was played in 1922. However, there were no games in 2023 because of a legal suit against the professional teams for such games. The games were back in 1924. In the weeks leading up to June 29, 1924, the Windsor Locks Journal and the Springfield and Hartford newspapers had been posting articles about the upcoming game between the New York Yankees, starring Babe Ruth, and the Windsor Locks All Collegians for many weeks. New grand stand and bleachers were erected on South End Park, and there was standing room available for many more."

Finally the New York Yankees versus Windsor Locks game happened, and WINDSOR LOCKS WON by 3-2. The Windsor Locks team held Babe Ruth hitless in four at-bats. How 'big' was that game? It was big enough that the results showed up in the New York Times on the day after the game. The June 29, 1924 game between the Windsor Locks All-Collegians and the New York Yankees may have been the last of the exhibition games played in Windsor Locks. No later articles about these games could be found in the Windsor Locks Journal after the June 29, 1924 game.

1938 Hurricane: Almost as Bad as the 1936 Hurricane

1938 hurricane caused the canal to flood. They dynamited the canal to reduce the flooding in basements of the Medlicott and Dexter's

Spring St. near Main St. facing Northeast ~1972

The picture contains: Jimmy Michaud's Barber Shop, Brett Flanders, X Cleaners, Sandy's Barber Shop, also, Jim Mulready's Guitar Studio and Doctor Young's Dentist office were located in the brick building above Marconi's Restaurant. Not pictured to the west of Jimmy's Barber Shop was Skip's Electronics, owned by Walter "Skip" Traska.

Story and photo from Frank Baron.

Trail riders at Reed's Farm on West St. ~ 1956. Second from left is Mario Giannuzzi. Partly cut off on right is Lindo Quagliaroli on his horse, Susie. Many local riders boarded their horses there. Susan Viggiano Barbosa boarded her horse, Scooter, there. Ray LaRussa often rode there with Lindo and Phyllis Quagliaroli.

Preli, Satirana & Ambrosetti: Italian Grocery Store Owners/Friends

Preli's Italian Market, 24 Grove St. ~1920

ABC Market, Main St. Owned by Red Ambrosetti, F. Barberi & J. Colli ~1920

Aldo Satirana's Oak St. Market (~1950)

From the 1920s, three Italian immigrants who were close friends, owned and ran Italian grocery stores in Windsor Locks. The top photo is of the building which hosted Bart Preli's Italian grocery store on lower Grove St from the 1920s to about 1940. Bart Preli and his wife, Theodora, were the aunt and uncle of Aldo Satirana's wife. Aldo owned the Grove St building which housed Preli's Market. Aldo also rented an apartment in the Grove Street building to Joe "Red" Ambrosetti, who was co-owner of the ABC Market on Main Street. Later Red owned "Red Ambrosetti's Market" on Spring Street, which later moved to a store in Coly's Hotel. Aldo ran the produce section of the original A&P store which was on Main St, near State St. Later, Aldo owned "Aldo's Oak Street Market". This was a tight-knit group of three men and their families who played a major role in Windsor Locks' Italian food markets for more than half a century.

Windsor Locks' Four Bowling Alleys

Windsor Locks' First Bowling Alley
Ben Boyer's Candepin Bowling Alley
1909-1917 68 Center Street

Blanche's Bowling Alley, Grove St. about 1930 - 1960

Part of 1956 Dexter Bowling Team at Villa Rose lanes. Back row, Left to Right are: Chet Grabiec, Joe Tria, Gene Doe, Art Ciparelli Charlie Pyznar & Jasper Matese. Front row: Peno Piazza, Janet Grabiec, Helen Tenerowicz, Helen Hawley, Jo Walters, & Joe Piastka

Villa Rose 1947-1989

Bradley Lanes opened in 1962. Became "Bradley Bowl" in 1967. It closed in 2018. It was replaced by "Sparetime Entertainment".

Train Station Trolley Hotel
Main Street 1904

Train Station
Main Street 2022

Photo taken from same spot 118 years later.

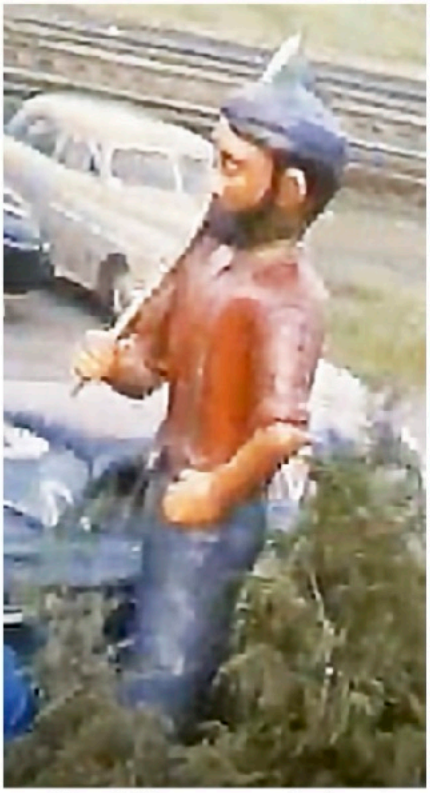
Paul Bunyan Statue by Attilio Traverso - 1954

In front of Windsor Locks Lumber Co.
on Suffield St.

In 1954 Centennial Parade
on Main Street

Every once in a great whle, a rare person decides to tackle a REALLY BIG project. Attilio Traverso, of Windsor Locks, was such a person. He worked as a repairman and salesman for a company that made calculators. His hobby was as an artist. He enjoyed doing paintings. One day, he got the urge to make something really big. He had seen a massive painting of "The Crucifixion" at the Forest Lawn Cemetary in California. It inspired he to make a giant statue, about 20 ft. tall, of the legendary woodsman, Paul Bunyan. He would do it for the float of the Windsor Locks Lumber Company's float in the 1954 Centennlal Parade. He had no training or experience in designing and building large structures. So he just went ahead and did it. It was a big hit in the parade, and the Windsor Locks Lumber Company decided to set it up in front of their store on Suffield Street. It remained there until the company sold that property.

Two Windsor Locks Carvings of Paul Bunyan



Paul Bunyan statue
By Attilo Traverso
1954 Centennial Parade

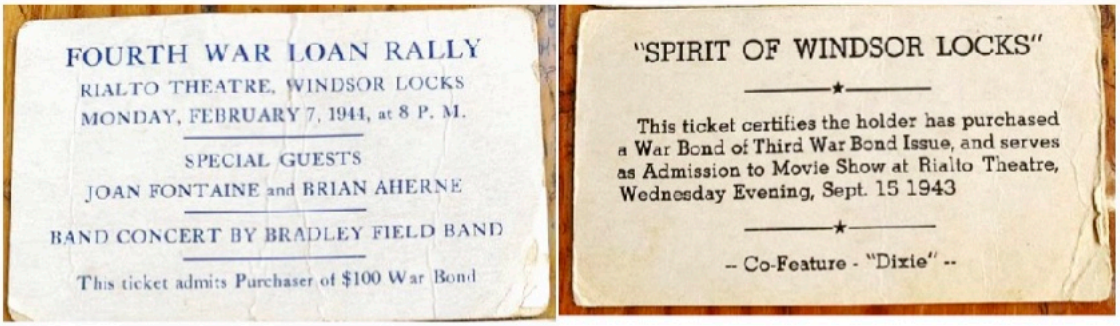
Paul Bunyan
Lumberjack Stores
a division of
The Windsor Locks Lumber Co.

Attilo Traverso carved a 20 foot tall statue of Paul Bunyan for the 1954 Centennial Parade. Later it stood in front of the Windsor Locks Lumber Company building on Suffield Street until the store closed. The "Lumberjack Stores" company was a wholly owned subsidiary of The Windsor Locks Lumber Company. They made statues of Paul Bunyan with their logo on the bottom. See photo at right. They were about a foot tall. As you can see, the smaller statue was NOT a copy of Mr. Traverso's statue. It is not known where the full size statue ended up. Two of the small statues are known to exist. The information below the photo on the right is from the engraved plate at the bottom of the statue, as can be seen in the photo.

Dexter Workers - 1938

1. Walter Hainey
2. Joseph (Dooley) Pinatti
3. Sam Draghi
4. Ernestr Merlo
5. Joseph Smith
6. Charles Bassinger
7. Newton White
8. Jack McLaughlin
9. Tony Pohorylo
10. John Babiarz
11. Jake Colli
12. George Gatti
13. Jim Carroll
14. Valmore Gratton
15. Charles McClosky
16. Vito Ketchen
17. Jim Cummings
18. Chester Reed
19. Bert Rising
20. Lucian Dombrowski
21. Francis Wallace
22. Tommy McCarroll
23. R. Pierson Smith

Windsor Locks World War II War Bond Tickets


FOURTH WAR LOAN RALLY
RIALTO THEATRE, WINDSOR LOCKS
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 1944, at 8 P. M.
SPECIAL GUESTS
JOAN FONTAINE and BRIAN AHERNE
BAND CONCERT BY BRADLEY FIELD BAND
This ticket admits Purchaser of $100 War Bond
"SPIRIT OF WINDSOR LOCKS"
This ticket certifies the holder has purchased a War Bond of Third War Bond Issue, and serves as Admission to Movie Show at Rialto Theatre, Wednesday Evening, Sept. 15 1943
-- Co-Feature - "Dixie" --

These rare tickets are from the **World War II home front financing campaigns** in Windsor Locks, CT, demonstrating how local movie theaters, Hollywood celebrities, and nearby military installations paired up to drive civic patriotism.

Ticket on Left: Fourth War Loan Rally (February 7, 1944)

The Drive: This ticket was issued during the **Fourth War Loan Drive** (which ran nationally from Jan. 18 to Feb. 15, 1944) to collect $14 billion,

The Cost: Admission was restricted exclusively to individuals who purchased a **$100 War Bond**. An actual Series E $100 bond cost the buyer $75 out of pocket and matured over a ten-year span.

Star Power: The rally featured Oscar-winning actress **Joan Fontaine** and her then-husband, stage and film actor **Brian Aherne,**

The Bradley Field Band: The music was provided by the military band stationed at nearby **Bradley Field.**

Ticket on Right: "Spirit of Windsor Locks" Event (September 15, 1943)

The Drive: This event occurred during the **Third War Loan Drive.** Towns were encouraged to meet community quotas to "sponsor" a piece of war equipment named after their municipality.

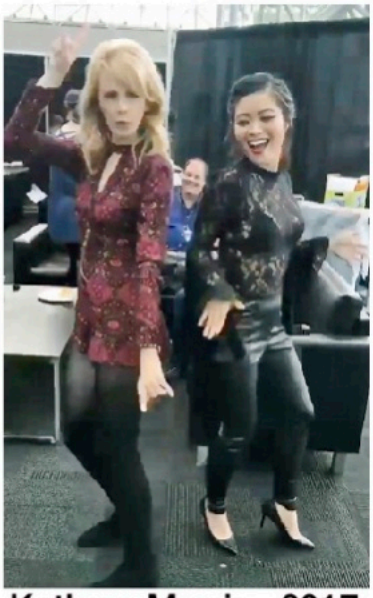
The Meaning: The phrase **"Spirit of Windsor Locks"** implies that this particular rally was held to purchase a military aircraft.

The Movie: The ticket granted admission to a special "Movie Show" screening of the newly-released Paramount Pictures musical film ***"Dixie"*, starring Bing Crosby and Dorothy Lamour**, which debuted in theaters in the summer of 1943.

Kathryn Morris: Professional Actress

Kathryn Morris as Lilly Rush in *Cold Case*

Kathryn Morris WLHS 1987



Kathryn Morris 2017 New York Comic Con

From age 6 to 17, Kathryn Morris and her family travelled the southern "Bible Belt" as a gospel group called The Morris Code. She had substantial musical "chops" when she was in grammar school. She was heavily involved in music and theater in Windsor Locks High School. She was president of Windsor Locks High School's chapter of the National Honor Society, co-captain of the girl's field hockey team, and a member of the NCCC All-Conference Chorus. She was very active in music and theater in college. Kathryn went to two colleges, Northeastern Christian Junior College and Temple University.

She had musical roles in three movies. She was in a Japanese music video based on the musical "Grease". In 1991, she played the role of Jen in the romantic musical comedy film "Cool As Ice".

In the 2001 movie, *A.I.: Artificial Intelligence*, she played a rock star. That required her to take intensive singing and guitar lessons. Unfortunately, those scenes were cut from the movie. That was a Steven Spielberg film. Spielberg also cast Kathryn in his next movie, *Minority Report,* in which she played Tom Cruise's wife.

From 1991 to 2018, she was in more than 25 shows on television, and in 25 movies. Kathryn's acting career skyrocketed. She played opposite such stars as Tom Cruise and Ben Affleck. She was in two consecutive movies by Steven Spielberg. She is most well-known for her starring role in the TV series, ***Cold Case,*** which was a hit from 2003 to 2010, and which ran for 156 episodes.

Items Commonly Found in 1950s Homes

Chrome & Formica Kitchen Set

Card Table and Chairs

Basement window for coal chute

Color TV with Rabbet Ears

Telephone Nook in wall

Wall slot for razor blades

Rotary Phone

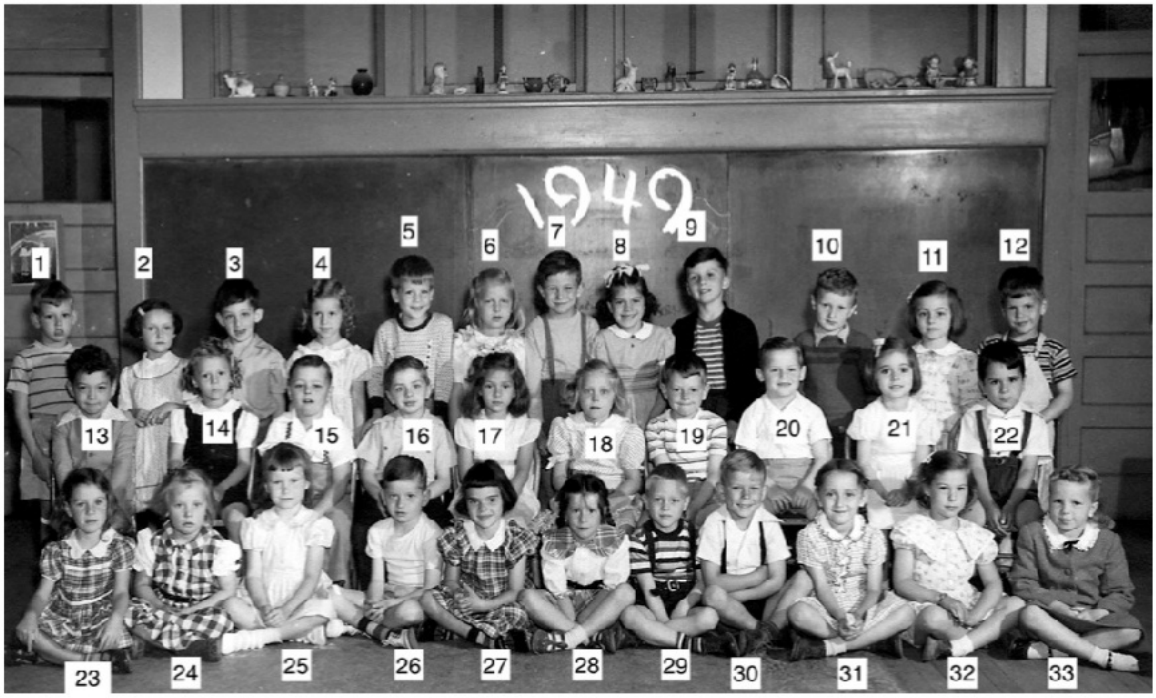
Boot scraper

Electric Can Opener

Mercurochrome

Windsor Locks 1949 Kindergarten Class

The classroom was in a tall brick building on Church St that was the original High School. It was to the East of what is now the Town Hall. The teacher was Miss Bruce.



Here is a list of the names of the children. It contains missing information and errors. The best list so far is: 2 - Barbara Turner, 3 - Malcolm Berman, 6 - Clair Tomazek, 8 - Julie ????, 9 - Mark Barberi, 10 - Bruce Winters (or his brother), 11 - Noreen Baron, 12 - Tom Kurharaski, 13 - Mel Montemerlo, 14 - Judy Zetterholm (Married name is Sandone), 15 - Ron Pauluh, 16 - Carl Richards, 17 - Carol Kraft, 18 - Jane Taravella, 20 - Jimmy McKenna (not sure), 21 - Leila Ferrari, 22 - Joe Tria, 23 - Eileen Courtney, 25 - Gloria Babiarz, 26 - Donald Pesci, 27 - Donna Pesci, 28 - Judy Price, 29 - Skip Mayoris, 30 - Jeffrey Lee, 31 - Peggy Draghi, 32 - Patty Kane, 33 - Susan Root.

Please send any information you have on the names of the students.

Do you remember Windsor Locks' McDonald's with the Space Shuttle on top?

Do you remember Windsor Locks' McDonald's with the Space Shuttle on the roof? I don't remember the year that it was taken down, but I remember going there every time I came back to town. I worked for NASA for 30 years, and my friends at NASA got a big kick out of it. It was right across Route 75 from Bradley Field. It was called "McBrad". Windsor Locks has had some really great things which stand out in memory.

Mel Montemerlo

Boy Scout Troop 257 Went To Disneyland - 1978

Windsor Locks Boy Scout Troop 257 trip to Disney World during Winter break. Scoutmaster is Frank Fredo. Scouts included: Mickey Fredo, Rob Goulet, Jay Hannon, Jeff Shovak, Mike Bernaski, Brad LaBree(?), Eddie Purcell, Jeff Mockus, Corey Laurito, and Hugh Donagher (list is incomplete and not in above order) Jim Hannon, Wes Mockus and Gary Laurito (also pictured) were part of the leadership. They held their weekly meeting at St. Mary School..

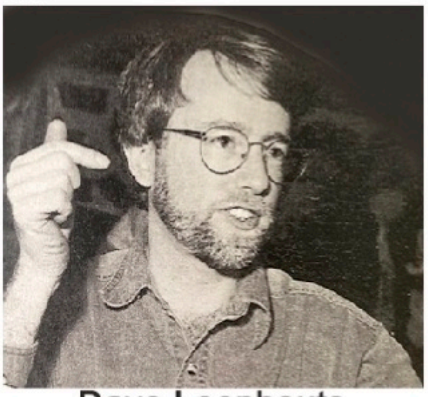
The "Public Park" , Predecessor of "Pesci Park"

The public park, behind St. Mary's School, was renamed "Pesci Park" in 1957. In the 1940s, 50s, and 60s, the public park was used for MANY activities.: for 'pick-up' games of baseball, basketball and football, for Little League baseball, for special events such as "Donkey Baseball", for the Swimming Pool, for the annual Firemen's' Carnival, for summer craft-making by the kids, and the list goes on and on and on. The importance of the park in those days cannot be overstated, in the days before television and cell phones, the local kids spent a great deal of time in the park. It was a different world.

Back then, "Drum Corps" were a big thing in Windsor Locks. Here is a photo of the St. Mary's Fife and Drum Corps in competition on the baseball diamond in the Public Park.

Fife & Drum Corps competition at St. Mary's Park, Windsor Locks, Conn.
St. Mary's Drum and Bugle Corps forms living rosary, about 1955

Mr. Leenhouts: Founder of the WLHS "Aces High" FIRST Robotics Team


Dave Leenhouts

In the spring of 1995, Dave Leenhouts attended an extra-curricular fair at at Windsor Locks High School. He was an engineer who worked at Hamilton Standard. He had mentored a FIRST robotics team in a nearby town and wanted to start a team in Windsor Locks.. He brought the robot that the other team had built. Mr. Leenhouts and the robot made a **BIG** impression. He volunteered to be the head mentor for a new FIRST team, if Windsor Locks High School would sponsor the team. Hamilton Standard provided the funds for the team to buy the robotics kit from the FIRST organization each year. However the FIRST competitions were held in other towns and cities, which involved significant travel costs for the students. The team found town businesses which served as team sponsors, and provide the necessary funding.

The WLHS team merged with the Suffield High School team and formed a joint teams called "Aces High". As of 2026, the team has:

- completed 29 years of participation
- participated in 99 events
- won 83 awards, and
- been to the national championship 16 times.

In 1999, the ACES HIGH team won the national championship.

FIRST is a contest between groups of high school students who are highly intelligent and highly motivated. That championship brought honor and recognition to the towns of Windsor Locks and Suffield, CT.

The list of awards won by Aces High from 1996 to 2023 fills many pages. **FIRST** teaches high school students about robotics by giving them hands-on experience in designing and building robots with help from experienced engineers. There is no cost to the students. Individual teams are formed in towns and cities around the world. They get "mentors" and funding from local engineering companies. The goals and rules for each year's competition are distributed to all teams. The funding provided by local organizations pays for the "robot kit" and to send the members of the local team to the Division competitions and possibly to the International Championship Competition.

Dave Leenhouts' impact on Windsor Locks High School has been massive. It is impossible to overstate the the importance of bringing the FIRST program into Windsor Locks High School.

Windsor Locks was into the 1950s/60s Muscle Car Movement

Hot 1958 Chevys at Dexter Plaza
Richard Sartori, Jerry Ridel, Paul Aston, Harold Kelsey

Joe Kobos' 1964 Stingray in 2022

Bob Montemerlo's 1962 Corvette

Muscle cars were a big thing in Windsor Locks during the 1960s. Here is a PARTIAL list of those hot-rodders and their cars. Ray LaRussa - 1964 Pontiac GTO. Kenny Mokrycki - 1964 Corvette Stingray. Paul Shonty - 1962 Impala Supersport. Joe Kobos -1964 Stingray. Paul Aston - 1963 Stingray. Doug Fuller - 1965 Corvette. Nevin Lescher - 1958 Cobra. Fred Miclon - 1970 Camaro SS350. Bobby York - 69 Camaro. Frank Zaine - 1969 Chevelle SS. Tommy Salutnic - Chevy II. Mark Zercie - 1969 Nova. Paul Tolisano - 66 Chevelle SS. Gary Chant - 1971 Chevy El Camino, Bob Montemerlo - 1962 Corvette. Darlene Smith - Pontiac GTO. Chuck Romine - 66 Chevelle, Dreux Lescell - 57 Nomad, Bruce Lescell - Buick GS.

Notice the Friendly's Ice Cream store in the background.

Cause of 19% Windsor Locks Population Drop in 1970s

1934 2016

Aerial View of Downtown Windsor Locks

Historical population		
Census	Pop.	%±
1860	1,587	—
1870	2,154	35.7%
1880	2,332	8.3%
1890	2,758	18.3%
1900	3,062	11.0%
1910	3,715	21.3%
1920	3,554	−4.3%
1930	4,073	14.6%
1940	4,347	6.7%
1950	5,221	20.1%
1960	11,411	118.6%
1970	15,080	32.2%
1980	12,190	−19.2%
1990	12,358	1.4%
2000	12,043	−2.5%
2010	12,498	3.8%
2020	12,613	0.9%

Between 1970 and 1980, the population of Windsor Locks dropped by almost 20%. Look at the population history chart on the right, Why did it happen? In in 1970s, the town was in the middle of the "Main Street Redevelopment Project". The town government felt that the Main St. business district had become a "blighted area". They got $1M from the Federal Government to tear down the entire business section and to rebuild it. They promised that new businesses would come to Windsor Locks, and replace the old ones that would be torn down. Unfortunately, no businesses came to replace the old ones. When they tore down all of the business buildings, they tore down all of the rooms, apartments and houses that filled the area along and just behind the string of stores. To understand this, look at the two arial photos of the exact same area. In each, Main St. is along the right side of the photo. You can see where it swings to the left, just past Grove St..The 1934 photo on the left is from before the Main St Redevelopment Project. The 2016 photo on the right is from after the buildings were torn down. The photo on the left shows that the area was FILLED with buildings above and behind the line of stores. From the 2016, photo, you can see that the area to the left of Main Street is relatively uninhabited. The people who lived in those low-cost rentals had to leave to find other low-cost housing and to find jobs. The mills along the canal were shutting down. The closing of the mills, and the lack of low-cost housing were the two main reasons for the population drop in the 1970s.

Windsor Locks Tornado Oct. 3, 1979

Bradley Air Museum aircraft after 1979 Tornado

Dale Drug Store after tornado

Frank's after tornado

1979 Tornado destroyed houses

The New England Air Museum

The **New England Air Museum** is located near the Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. It is one of the largest aviation museums in the United States. Its history reflects both New England's critical role as an aerospace manufacturing hub and a story of remarkable resilience following a natural disaster.

In 1959, a group of local aviation enthusiasts formed the **Connecticut Aeronautical Historical Association (CAHA)** to save historically significant aircraft from being scrapped. Their goal was to preserve New England's deeply rooted aviation legacy.

In 1967, CAHA opened its first permanent outdoor display and indoor museum structure near Bradley International Airport, giving the expanding collection a home accessible to the public.

On October 3, 1979, an F4 tornado riped through Windsor Locks and struck the museum directly. The storm destroyed 16 rare aircraft, severely damages 10 others, and flattens the main exhibit facility. Despite the devastation, volunteers salvaged surviving artifacts and committed to rebuilding.

In 1981 to 1985, the organization reopened on a 12-acre site on the northwest perimeter of Bradley International Airport. It officially used the name **New England Air Museum**. New climate-controlled hangars were constructed to safeguard restored aircraft indoors.

In the 1990s, the **New England Air Museum** expanded to three main display hangars spanning over 100,000 square feet. It established major interactive educational programs and an active restoration workshop.

Windsor Locks' EARLIEST Pizza Places

TEDDY'S RESTAURANT
Charles Smith, Your Host
SANDWICHES & GRINDERS OF EXCELLENCE
Open 7 Days A Week To Serve You
220 Main ..... W Lks NAtl-3-7401

"Frank's" served hamburgs, hot dogs and grinders 1950s
Elm St. & Route 75, Owned by Frank E. Hancock Sr.

La PIZZA AT ITS BEST
Shonty's RESTAURANT
AIR CONDITIONED
HOT OVEN GRINDERS
Orders Put Up To Take Home
STEAKS • CHOPS • CHICKEN AND SPAGHETTI
Choice Liquors • Wines • Beers
Catering To Parties & Banquets
Windsor Locks NAtional 3-7479
200 MAIN ST. WINDSOR LOCKS

TANYA'S
Pizza Palace
HOT PIZZA & COLD BEER
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK
SPAGHETTI • RAVIOLI • LASAGNA • SHELLS • GRINDERS
ORDERS TO TAKE OUT ON EVERYTHING
DOMESTIC & IMPORTED BEER
Open Daily 11 A.M. To 1 A.M. - Sun. Till 11 P.M.
28 TURNPIKE RD., WINDSOR LOCKS
BEER PERMIT
WINDSOR LOCKS
623-2843

PICCOLO PIZZA
• 16" GIANT GRINDERS
Also Serving The Finest Italian Dishes
TAKE OUT SERVICE ON ENTIRE MENU - 24 HR. COIN OP ICE MACHINE
SPECIAL DISCOUNT FOR PARTY ORDERS - PIZZA DOUGH, SPAGHETTI SAUCE ALSO AVAILABLE
NOW SERVING - LIBERO - A NON-ALCOHOLIC BEER BREWED BY LOWENBRAU
50 TURNPIKE RD., WINDSOR LOCKS
623-5727

Tony's
PIZZA PALACE
HOT PIZZA!
OPEN 6 DAYS A WEEK
SPAGHETTI • RAVIOLI • LASAGNA • SHELLS
ORDERS TO TAKE OUT ON EVERYTHING
Pizza dough made fresh daily • Only choice domestic & imported ingredients used WE MAKE OUR OWN SAUCE TAKE SOME HOME!
GRINDERS • MILK SHAKES
Open Daily 11 A.M. To 1 A.M. - Sun. Till 11 P.M. Closed Mon.
173 TURNPIKE RD., WINDSOR LOCKS
WINDSOR LOCKS
623-2843

"IN WINDSOR LOCKS!"
PIZZA PARLOR
• COLD BEER ON TAP
• SPAGHETTI • BAR-B-Q-CHICKEN & RIBS • SALADS
• ITALIAN DISHES • SANDWICHES
ASK US FOR SPECIAL PRICES ON LARGE PIZZA ORDERS
PIZZA-GRINDERS
All Orders To Go
STORE HOURS - MON. - THURS. 11 A.M. - 11 P.M. - FRI. & SAT. 11 A.M. - 12 MIDNIGHT - SUN. 3 P.M. - 10 P.M.
Call Ahead For Your Order - It Will Be Ready Upon Arrival
DIAL Windsor Locks 627-0000
252 Main St., Windsor Locks

AD's, Second Poquonock, H&M

Frank's, Tommy's, Shonty's and Bridge View had the first pizza ads in Windsor Locks in 1956.

Leander Jackson, WL School Superintendent Was Fired by the State of Conn. - 1925

Leander Jackson 1928

Leander Jackson became Windsor Locks' High School Principal in 1913, and School Superintendent in 1925. He was fired from his Superintendent position in 1925. The story was never posted in the Windsor Locks Journal, but it was in the New York Times. The students and parents were angry, and they protested. They tried to find out what happened and why he was fired. There were a number of meetings in Windsor Locks to figure out what happened. No one in Windsor Locks fired Mr. Jackson. It took three years to find out what happened and fix the problem. It turns out that there was a change in Connecticut State laws, which put the town school boards under the control of a Connecticut State supervisor, who also controlled the money coming from the state to the town school boards.. When this was found out by the town of Windsor locks, the town complained. The State of Connecticut cancelled that practice, and returned the control of local School Boards back to towns.

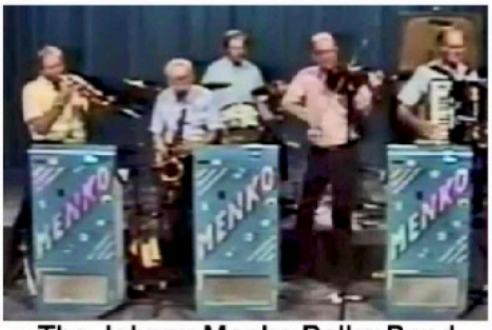
The story of this process is long and complex. The short version is that the towns fought it and won. Mr. Jackson returned to his job as Superintendent of Schools, and the townspeople were happy. Mr. Jackson was well-respected and well-loved in Windsor Locks. Mr. Jackson remained in that job until 1948. His son, Robert, replaced him in that job, and held it until 1949. Leander and Robert Jackson are an integral part of the history of Windsor Locks.

This is a VERY SHORT version of a long and complex story. The rest of the story can be found in Mel Montemerlo's 2022 book, "Understanding Windsor Locks History",

Windsor Locks' Longest Lasting Bands

Savage Brothers Band ~1984

FullKrew in the early years ~1986



The Johnny Menko Polka Band

"The Locks People" Band Directors

Charlie Woodhouse
Director 1965-1995

Dick Brunette
Director 1995-2014

Band Name	Began	Ended	Total Years as of 2025
Johnny Menko's Polka Band	1936	2009	73
The Locks People	1965	2014	49
Savage Brothers Band	1984	still active in 2025	41
Full Krew	1985	still active in 2025	40

No photo of the Locks People Band could be found..

Windsor Locksers who went to Woodstock - 1969

Woodstock, 1969. Stan Swed is in a white t-shirt on the hood of the car. Bobby Nussbaum is on the hood, on Stan's left. Joe Punkavage, Dennis Plante, Steve Costello, Lenny Jubrey, and Tommy Hart were there too.

Windsor Locks - about 1945
Members of the Police Department and Civic Leaders

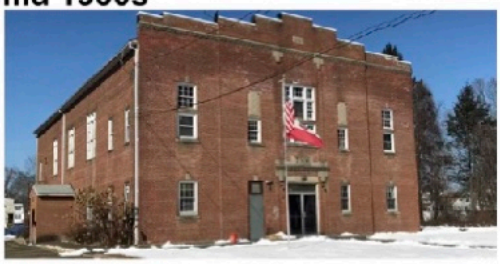
"THE OLD GUARD"

Members of the Windsor Locks Police Department with civic leaders sat for this picture sometime about 1945.
Former Police Chief James Henry Whitten(seated center, front row) was able to identify the men, but not the occasion.
Seated: front row-Anthony Bertussi, Charlie Walters, J. Henry Whitten, Jim Anderson, Charlie Zenzick
Seated: 2nd row-William Fitzpatrick, Phil Johnson, Francis Harvey, Chief John Sullivan, Edward Kennedy, Dexter Coffin
Standing: 3rd row-Charlie Alexson, Patsy Lanati, Tom Silk, Mike Caffrey, Ed Silk, Mando Bianchi, Orrie Champigny, Edward Lally.

Windsor Locks Ethnic Social Club Buildings

Built by Capt. Denslow in Mid 1700. Bought by Dexter to house single male workers. Became first Italian American Club. Corner of South Center St. and South St.

Italian Progressive Club. From mid 1930s



Polish National Home - From mid 1930s

Italian American Club -1960

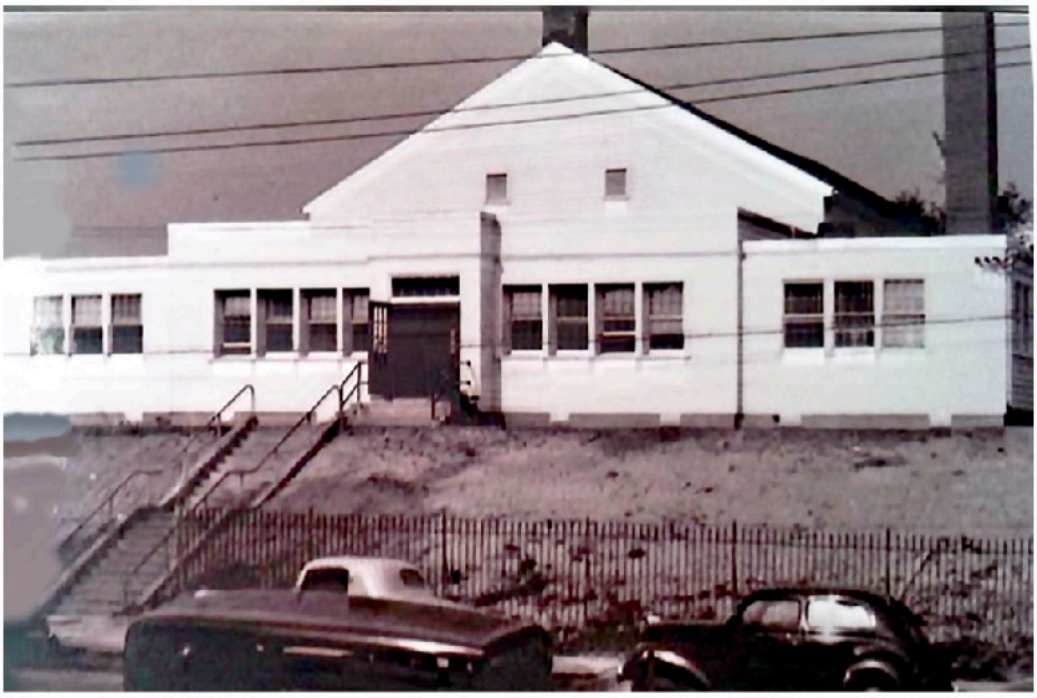
Windsor Locks has had ethnic social clubs since the 1800s. The Italians have had the Italian American Club and the Italian Progressive Club. There were two Italian-American Club buildings, which can be seen above.. There was also the St. Oronzo Club, which had its original building on the south end of Main Street. They moved to their final club house on Southwest Ave. In the 1960s, that property was sold, and the Bellarmine Center was built there.

The Polish Club's first building was on Second St. Later they moved to a building on First St. See above.

Later, the Polish and Italian club houses were turned into "bars". They were still "clubs", and they retained their names, but anyone could join. They lost their ethnic identities. They were "Private Clubs", so you could smoke in them while drinking and eating. That was not allowed in public bars.

The Irish had the Ancient Order of the Hibernians, but they didn't have their own building. They met in the Town Hall.

Windsor Locks' USO Clubhouse



Windsor Locks USO Club
"United Service Organization"

During WWII, Windsor Locks had a USO club. Their clubhouse was on the corner of Spring and West Streets. The USO's role during World War II was absolutely vital. It was a civilian, non-profit organization that was created to be a "home away from home" for American military personnel. The primary purpose of the USO was to boost the morale of the millions of troops who were training and fighting far from their families. It provided a wholesome, welcoming place for service members to relax and socialize when they were off duty. It hosted dances, card games and social gatherings for servicemen and women.

After the war, the building was offered to the town for $1, but the town didn't want it. According to Joan Kress Hurst in a 2019 Facebook post, it was bought by the Rensselear Polytechnic Institute (RPI). It was disassembled and moved to RPI in 1946. It became the RPI Playhouse.

1946 Parade
Windsor Locks' First Ambulance.

Lions Club raised the money, and donated the 1936 vehicle to the town in 1944.

Windsor Locks History On 1 Page

Four Phases Cover Three Centuries

Windsor Locks has gone through four overlapping phases in its history.

PHASE 1 - THE SETTLERS (1660-1830)

In the late 1600s, a small number of families moved into the Pine Meadow section of Windsor. Agriculture was the main form of commerce. A few mills were built.

PHASE 2 - MAIN STREET AND MANUFACTURING (1830-1960)

In 1829 a canal was built. It caused entrepreneurs to come to the area and build menufacturing mills, which needed a great deal of unskilled labor. This caused many European immigrants to come to the area. Soon, housing and stores were built to service the workers. A community built up along Main Street. In 1854, the town of Windsor Locks was incorporated. It grew and thrived. However, the United States changed from a manufacturing economy to a service economy. By the 1960s, most of the mills were gone, and the Main Street stores were in a downturn. The town government eliminated the stores along Main Street.

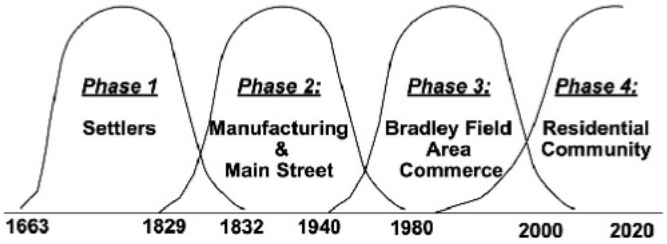
PHASE 3 - BRADLEY FIELD AREA COMMERCE (1960-2000)

In the 1960s and 70s, the Bradley Field area was attracting large manufacturing corporations. Hamilton Standard, Kaman Aircraft, Hi-G, Sweet Life, Choice Vend, and other corporations moved into the area, which became the new economic engine of the town. The area between West St and Bradley Field filled up with houses to support the families who moved into the area for those jobs.

PHASE 4 - RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY (2000-)

The hurricane of 1979 and other factors caused most of those companies to downsize or cease operations. After that, Windsor Locks became what is called "a Residential Community" or a "Bedroom Community". People moved to Windsor Locks, not to get jobs, but for lower taxes and housing costs.

The Four Phases of Windsor Locks History



Windsor Locks Town Dump

Windsor Locks town dump, West Spring Street, 1960

Windsor Locks town dump - 1956

Windsor Locks town dump - 1956

Windsor Locks town dump - 1956

For a long time, Windsor Locks had a "town dump" where Reed Park is located (2020). You drove there by turning right off of Spring Street onto Hathaway Street, across from the Fish Hatchery. For decades, there was no garbage pickup in town. You drove your garbage to the dump. You had to watch where you parked. You didn't want to park over anything that was burning. The dump closed in about 1962. Homes were built near it, and Reed park was built.

Windsor Locks Postcards from early 1900s

Early Shopping Malls Loved by Windsor Locksers

Eastfield Mall in early 2023
Eastfield Mall opened in 1968 and closed in 2023. It was one of the earliest mall. It had a proud 56 year lifespan.

The Enfield Mall opened in the 1960s. It had the Enfield Book Store, a printed T-shirt shop (Crazy Joyce's), Jonathan's Arcade, ice cream store,the I-90 bar, which featured live music. It had two large stores: Woolco and Sage-Allen, and "Eddie's Sporting Goods". By the early 1980s, not much was left.

Enfield Square Mall was built in 1971. It replaced the Enfield Mall as the "place to shop". It had: G.Fox, Steigers, JC Pennys, Walden Books, the Pet Shop, Figaro's, Hickory Farms, the Wagon Wheel package store, Hickory Farms, Friendly', Chess King, Thom McCann Shoes, Kinney Shoes, the Tie Shop, Lerner's, Casual Corner, and others. By 2005, most stores were gone.

Windsor Locks Telephone System
Late 1940s - Early 1950s

S.N.E.T. - AT&T Building on Spring St.

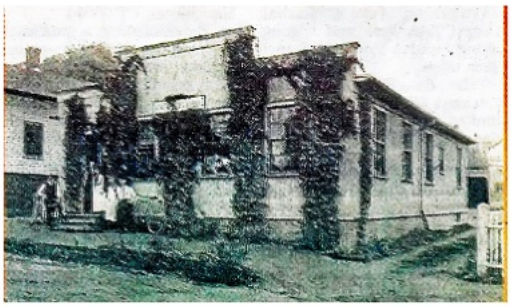
Operators

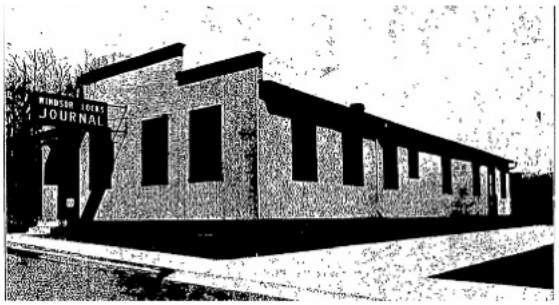
Operators

Windsor Locks Journal Office on Spring St.

former Dowd store & WLJ office

Windsor Locks Journal Building 1966





History of the WLFD Annual Carnival

The **Windsor Locks Fire Department Annual Carnival** traditionally takes place during the last full week of June, marking the beginning of summer. It is recognized as the town's largest and longest-running annual community event. Fire department carnivals were booming in the 1920s and 30s, specifically to do fundraising. The carnival has followed a three-day schedule (typically Thursday through Saturday). The department contracts an amusement production company, such as "Smokey's Greater Shows", to truck in the classic midway. This includes the hallmark Ferris Wheel, standard spinning rides, skill games, and classic carnival treats. Friday night is the Fireworks show. Saturdays are for the parade. Be sure to try the "Fried Dough" at the festival.

Windsor Locks High School Became Town Hall

Original Union Grammar School (built in late 1880s), Windsor Locks High School (built in 1841) and Dining Hall. Photo from 1954.

Windsor Locks Town Hall. Photo from 2026

Ten Windsor Locks Bands

Accidental Groove

Blues Condition

Chainsmoker

Lipstick

The 70s Project

Only In A Jeep

FullKrew

The Daze to Follow

Savage Brothers Band

The Belvetones